His IN A LIFE OF PRAYER

NORMAN B. HARRISON

Lyman Erickson

HIS IN A . . . LIFE OF PRAYER

By

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"His Salvation as Set Forth in the Book of Romans,"
"His In Joyous Experience, Paul's Epistle to the Philippians," "His Sure Return."

"Men ought always to pray"—Luke 18:1.

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THE APPROACH

THE PLEA FOR A LIFE OF PRAYER

"Wait on the Lord"—Ps. 27:14.

"Dying for lack of breath." What if this should prove the true diagnosis of the ills and disabilities of the Church and of the child of God in our day? The case is this:

The Church is "the body of Christ," an organism, possessed of His life. Our risen Lord, now a "life-giving Spirit," "breathed on them and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22). This is the basic fact of all Christian living. The Church's life, corporate as well as individual, in its beginning and in its continuing, is the very breath of the risen, glorified Son of God.

One of the ceaseless activities of the body is its breathing. It is essential to self-preservation. We do it involuntarily. Such is the function of prayer; hence its primal importance. It is the Church's part, practically, in the sustaining of her life. We sing:

> **"Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,**
> **The Christian's native air."**

But it is a law of the body that the more actively and vigorously it exercises the more deeply and freely it must breathe. Under exertion the body demands a quickened breathing, an ampler supply of air, to meet its necessities.

The application to the Church is obvious. She has come upon a day of almost hectic exertion. Her activities are many and varied. She is endeavoring to do things as never before. Hence, acknowledging that she is an organism, this speeding up of activity, by every known law, automatically, so to speak, calls for increased breathing. To sustain her own life she must have more prayer. Physiologically and scientifically judged, to refuse herself an increase of breathing, proportionate to her heightened exertion, must prove fatal.

From this logic there is no escape. Yet the Church, instead of drinking more deeply at the fountain of her spiritual resources to meet the stress of her present program of action, has unquestionably a diminishing sense of need in the matter. It is this that alarms. Is the Church's unconscious slogan coming to be: "*Do* Something, and *Be* Nothing"?

Prayerlessness a Sin

The stress of the hour, arguing for more prayer but leading to less, the disparity between the prayer-privilege as seen in God's Word and the prayer-practice as seen in daily life —these constrain to the present writing, in the belief that many children of God and of Grace share with us a sense of shortcoming in the work of prayer, often mounting to shame over the degree of neglect and restraint of prayer to which we are permitting the present "system" to reduce us.

An illustration. A most devoted servant of the Lord, wholly given to His service, nothing withheld, when it was suggested that prayer was of such tremendous importance that one should *aim* to give as much as one hour a day to it, replied: "The exactions of my work, the schedule under which I live, preclude any protracted period of prayer. I cannot find the time for it." If such an one must so confess under the present system, what of the scores upon scores of others? What of the average preacher? Known as a "man of God," is he a godly man? Is he spending enough time in God's presence to justify the retention of the title? What about the Christian business man? Mechanic? Teacher? Student? Member of society?

No one doubts that a Judson, a Brainerd, a Carey, a Henry Martyn, an Andrew Murray, a McCheyne, a Finney, a Moody, a Chapman, paid the price of power in the habitual practice of protracted prayer. They did it. Therefore their lives told while they lived, and continue unabated in their influence to our day.

Little praying, and listless. Shortcoming, do we call it? That is not a sufficiently strong term. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is SIN" (Jas. 4:17). With Samuel let us label our lack of prayer as plain downright s-i-n. Facing a crisis of defection from God and consequent spiritual declension—so akin to our own day—Samuel recognized his responsibility in the words: "As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. 12:23).

The Appalling Need

Any barest appraisal of the present day situation must set it down as extremely serious. Not to confess it so is to acknowledge ourselves lacking in spiritual insight. We need to keep ourselves alert lest we become acclimated to con-

ditions that should never receive our mental or moral approval.

Our educational institutions are the moulders of youthful character. Speaking of them, from grade schools up, a man of wide observation says:

> "Not merely the religious conditions, but the moral conditions, are terrible beyond expression. I could not put into print things that have come under my observation as to the slump, not only in modesty, but in the moral decency, not only among our young men and boys, but among our young women and girls."

Then crime today is not a matter of individual initiative; it is corporate, trained and organized. There are schools that train and turn out adepts in the latest methods of crime and fraud. We have legalized Atheism. The American Association for the Advancement of Atheism is duly incorporated and authorized to carry out its deadly program of assault on God, His Bible, His Christ, His Church, with all the sacred beliefs and institutions springing therefrom.

A close student of our national life charges that nearly 50 per cent of our youth are living on the danger line in the matter of morals, and that between 15 and 20 per cent indulge in immorality. Addicts to narcotics, it is stated, number 1,600,000—an increasingly irresponsible class, very largely young people. The recent report of the League of Nations' Commission on the white-slave traffic strikes horror to the heart as it charges the principal nations (ours is not in the list) with criminal complicity in this widely ramified commercialized vice, characterized as "This filthy stain on civilization."

But why add to the list of particulars? There are many branches from the one root. If only the Church were girded with power for such an hour! Of her condition, an outstanding leader writes:

> "As I travel from one end of this land to the other, and have opportunity to see for myself the condition of the churches; as I read the religious periodicals; as I talk with men and women of influence and power in the church, my heart would be nigh unto despair if I did not know God and that He answers prayer.
>
> "The gross error being taught by many professedly orthodox ministers; the absence of the real, living gospel from the preaching of many who do not preach error, but who are certainly not preaching the truth in its simplicity and in the power of the Holy Ghost; the unconcern of the

great mass of the membership of our churches regarding the lost at home and abroad; the growing compromise with the world on the part of a large proportion of the membership of our churches, the neglect of real prayer and the openly avowed disbelief in prayer on the part of not a few; the inactivity in real soul-winning work, cannot but fill any intelligent and properly instructed Christian with a sorrow that almost breaks the heart".*

The Apparent Impotence

The evident powerlessness of the Church to cope with the situation should shame the followers of our all-conquering Christ and cause us to prostrate ourselves in the dust before Him. We are told that 7,500 churches of evangelical faith went the whole year (1925) without a single accession. It takes at least 30 in our churches to rescue and add one more. The Annual of one large denomination shows it required 56 to secure a net gain of one. Of our young men, 12,000,000 are not members of any church; 7,000,000 are said never to darken a church door. In the State of Missouri alone 500,000 children are reported to be without Christian teaching.

We seem to stand once more with His disciples at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration. Our Lord has had His transforming, empowering communion with the Father; but we have not. We are confronted with a father, presenting his boy, enslaved, the victim of evil, a sad epitome of the world's great need. The Master has commissioned us to relieve such in His name. We rise to the task, little realizing our impotence. We are earnest, sincere, but nothing happens. We are forced to confess defeat.

Then the Master comes, fresh from fellowship with His Father. At once the seemingly impossible takes place. The need is met; the child is cured. Amazed and abashed, we ask Him privately, "Why could not we cast him out?" Listen anew to His answer: "This kind can come out by nothing, save by prayer" (Mark 9:29, R.V.).

Now we understand why the world's need goes unmet. For lack of prayer. And we make high resolve to withdraw with Him to our Mount of Transfiguration, ere we essay to go down to the Valley of Service. To such renewing prayer, with its resultant power to live and serve, the truths herein presented are a call and a challenge.

*From a recent article by R. A. Torrey.

Read
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CHAPTER I

SEVEN REASONS FOR A LIFE OF PRAYER

"Lord, teach us to pray"—Luke 11:1.

How interesting, and profitable withal, would it be if we were in position to delve into the reasons, or reasoning, which prompted that first group of followers of our Lord to make request of Him that He teach them to pray. Was it primarily His example, as suggested by the statement, "As He was praying in a certain place," an example they felt was a part of the pattern they should follow? Was it the natural yearning of an awakening spiritual life, a life that craves satisfaction in fellowship with God and that starves when deprived of it? Was it a logical tracing of the evident force and effectiveness of Jesus' life and ministry—His grace and gentleness, His love and tenderness, His wisdom and meekness, His truth and genuineness—a tracing of these back to Jesus' prayer-life as their fountainhead? Was it an undefined sense of need which they instinctively felt could be met only by a Life of Prayer such as they saw in the Saviour?

Undoubtedly we, the present day disciples of our Lord, need a new urge to prayer, a new conviction of its indispensable values, a new reasoning as to the relationship of cause and effect between a genuine prayer-life and the attributes, attainments and achievements that should characterize a Christian, his life and service. We will never pray as we should until we see it as a necessity, indispensable to the life we have undertaken to live.

Why does a man install a telephone in his home? He feels that he cannot do without it, that it is necessary to his way of living, to his getting things done. Why does a farmer install and use a plow? He knows he cannot till the soil, he cannot function or succeed as a farmer without it. He does not need to be argued into owning and operating one; the case is too obvious. It should be just so with prayer. And it would be, did we but understand the reasons which dictate its use, constantly and consistently. Not seeing them, the result is disastrous. It is this: Many, many Christians say their prayers, and get nowhere; com-

paratively few, yes, lamentably few, make intelligent use of prayer as a definite means, adapted, and therefore adopted, to accomplishing definite and desired ends.

Were we so situated as to be capable of taking account of our losses in the realm of spiritual things, as we are accustomed to doing in things financial and material, we would undoubtedly be surprised, startled and shocked to discover what tremendous losses we are suffering, losses traceable solely and directly to a lack of prayer. The case is one of self-robbery, to our utter impoverishment.

In one of the most simple, inescapable statements of Scripture—so plain that a way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein—God sets down our losses and lacks as due to prayerlessness: "Ye have not, because ye ask not" (Jas. 4:2). Nothing could be more logically and categorically traced to its cause and source—"because." Nor does the failure to have apply merely, or mostly, to "things," in the outward realm. If this were true we might obviate the need of prayer with more diligent effort to bestow "things" upon ourselves. But it applies the more by far to spiritual attainment. It is here we are wholly dependent upon Him. And how firmly, how faithfully, He forestalls any misunderstanding: "Ye have not, because"—let none seek to evade the issue or lay the blame elsewhere—"because ye ask not."

In the glory, when the secrets of hearts are laid bare, we will doubtless be grieved beyond measure at the revelation of what we might have achieved had we but had full and faithful recourse to prayer as God has provided for it in His Word.

Briefly let us consider seven outstanding reasons that should spur us, in a day when prayer is so greatly needed yet so generally neglected, to devote ourselves anew to a Life of Prayer.

I—To Honor God as Our Father

God is a great economist. As such He must needs anticipate every possible requirement for the continued existence, comfort and well-being of His creatures upon earth. Man, seeking to understand His provisions, terms them "laws." Their fine adjustment is a constant source of amazement. Occupying a superposition among them all is prayer, a sort of superprovision for His personal intervention and admin-

istration on behalf of those who will have recourse to it. Thus prayer is a wonderful part of the world's economy. If this were all, we should pray.

But God is infinitely more than an economist. To us He is "Our Father." This adds an appeal that is highly personal. He is an economist, plus—plus the unfailing love and concern that Fatherhood carries with it. For, consider. What is a Father for? Confessedly to provide for his children. This our Heavenly Father seeks the privilege of doing, and has appointed prayer to that end. Thus the Son, knowing the yearning of His Father-heart, seeks to persuade us:

> "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. 7:7-11).

In other words, God wants to be to us as a Father if only we will be to Him as children, and ask. But if we do not ask, what? We are preventing Him from functioning as a Father. We are excluding His Father-care from our lives, spurned and unsought. A prayerless life dishonors the Father-son relationship. To give to Him the honor rightfully due Him as our Father, aside from all consideration of results accruing therefrom, we must live a Life of Prayer.

II—To Discharge Our Office as Priests

Every believer knows, or should know, that under the New Covenant he has been inducted into the office of Priest, with prescribed duties to discharge.

> "Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5; see also v. 9).

All evangelicals readily acknowledge that the Old Testament priest was a type, which type is fulfilled in us. But the implications of this fact have never struck home with seriousness to the Christian consciousness. We still call the rank and file of our people "laymen" and look upon the

"clergy" as our official class. This is an unscriptural distinction that robs our people of a due sense of official responsibility. Truth is, there is no provision in the Church for laymen. Every one occupies an official position. Every one must assume official duties. They are those of the priest's office. No one is exempt.

This, then, is the second reason for a Life of Prayer. It is an urgent one that should stir every last believer to a new alertness. We are to give ourselves to prayer for the exercise of our office, for the discharge of our official duties. Whenever we live prayerless lives we are neglecting, we are vacating, our office. What would we think if we went down town in one of our cities, only to find desks closed and office doors locked, business men neglecting their office, the work they have undertaken? It is no different with Christians when they are neglectful of prayer. The work to which they have been officially called and appointed remains undone.

Moreover, we are not alone in this work. When Jesus ascended on high, it was to take upon Himself the office-work of High Priest. It is an office with a real work, an age-long task—"He ever liveth to make intercession." In appointing us to the office of priests He is privileging us to share His work. He asks us to take part of it upon ourselves. This is just what we do when we engage in prayer. How glorious the task! Surely we will not neglect it.

III—To Avail Ourselves of Our New Privilege as Believers

When the New Covenant was completed with the Saviour's death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father, these facts not only ushered the believer into the priestly office but brought to him an entirely new prayer-privilege. Anticipating this, Jesus said to His disciples:

> "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

Necessarily this is something new. Not until now has His name been of any value as a plea in prayer. But the moment He has triumphed as our Sin-Bearer and been received back into glory, He is accorded the Victor's place of honor and power, sharing the Father's throne, possessed of "a name that is above every name" (Phil. 2:9).

That "Name," He takes pains to tell us, He is leaving with us as our all-prevailing approach to the throne of heavenly grace. Its use is the prerogative peculiar to the New Testament believer. No name comparable to His in all the universe. By the same token no privilege among men is comparable to this which is accorded to us. What if we neglect to use it? What must He think of us? What must be our irreparable loss?

IV—To Fulfill Our Obligation to Fellow-Believers

Paul's loftiest Epistle closes with this exhortation, if not command:

> "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:18).

This is accompanied with the inclusion of himself and his particular needs in ministering the Gospel (vs.19), thereby enlarging the scope of the exhortation to comprehend all believers, workers and leaders down through the age.

This all-inclusive prayer-duty rests upon a twofold relationship: The fact of our union with Christ and with one another in His body, together with the further fact that, thus identified with Him, we secure for ourselves and all other believers the active hostility and relentless enmity of His foe and ours (see Eph. 6:11,12). This community of interest, one life uniting us all, one danger confronting us all, binds us together in the solemn obligations of a holy prayer-union.

The claims created by this union for a mutual faithfulness to each other in prayer are readily enforced by the experiences of our natural bodies. As the members of the body instinctively protect one another, each mindful of the other's welfare, each alert to the other's peril, such is the instinctive prayer-obligation of each believer for every other.

It is the most beautiful, the most intimately binding bond of brotherhood ever conceived. To practice ourselves faithfully in this prayer-call is to create, inevitably, a new consciousness of oneness among Christians the world over.

Nor are we at liberty to regard the prayer enjoined as of merely occasional or passing concern. It must go to grips

—praying always, watching, persevering, supplicating on behalf of those in the prayer-union. A truly great conception of Christian obligation this. How glorious to really, faithfully and continuously, give ourselves to each other in the practice of it.

V—To Seek and To Save the Souls of Men

The soul-winning ministry of prayer has yet to come home with conviction to the heart and conscience of the Church of Christ. Why do we see so few passing from death unto life? Lack of definite, believing prayer to this end; that lack rooted further back in a deep-seated sluggishness of desire—this we must own, with shame, to be the answer.

When we have taken our place in the Body of Christ, and realize that all about us are those who should rightfully be one with us in Him, we are moved to plead in prayer: the finished work of our Christ on their behalf, "that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9); the gracious purposes of our God, "who will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4), "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9); the blessed ministry of the Spirit, come, since Calvary, to "convict the world of sin . . . of sin, because they believe not on Me" (John 16:8, 9); the quickening power of His Word to beget faith unto life (Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; Rom. 10:17).

A study of the Gospels yields this interesting and instructive fact regarding faith for others: as far as the record states the circumstances, three times as many were healed and helped through the intercession of others as obtained this blessing through their own asking. For example, the paralytic, borne of four. Recall their earnestness in seeking the blessing for their friend, tearing up the roof and letting him down at Jesus' feet. "When Jesus saw *their* faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mark 2:5). And again, the Syrophenician woman, coming with her daughter. "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is *thy* faith: be it *unto thee* even as thou wilt. And *her daughter* was made whole from that very hour" (Matt. 15:28).

"He shall ask." But what if we do not ask? We shudder at the responsibility. Lost! And the blame lies at the door of negligent Christians, in the charge, "No man cared for my soul." Dear reader, have you a prayer list (the mark of an in-earnest prayer life), and are you daily bearing up before God those for whom Christ died, including them, as He undoubtedly did, in His Calvary sacrifice? Prayer is the fundamental agency in Evangelism. It is yours to use.

VI—To Outwit and Overcome the Powers of Evil

No mere man is a match at any time for the superhuman spiritual forces arrayed against us. Even our Lord Jesus would not face the enemy of God and of souls, keenly intent upon defeating the whole scheme of redemption, apart from prayer and God's Word as His weapons. So in His model of prayer He puts this petition into our mouths:

> "Deliver us from the evil one" (Matt. 6:13, R.V.).

Many are the scriptures that warn of the spiritual warfare upon which we are launched, of the subtlety of the foe, of his sinister purposes, and, withal, of his strength. Consider but two, in each case coupled with an exhortation in keeping with the conflict that confronts us:

> "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Pet. 5:8, 9).

> "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:11, 12).

Nothing short of "the whole armor of God" will do. Thank God, He has provided an armor and it is adequate if taken in its entirety. Of this equipment, prayer is an essential, integral part, without which we are not only vulnerable and defenseless but weak and defeated. He who neglects prayer can never hope for the crown of the overcomer.

VII—To Personally Grow in Grace and Godliness

Paul and Peter have left these significant words of admonition for the believer:

> "Exercise thyself rather unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7).
> "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18, R.V.).

In both instances the writers, as shown by the context, are warning against the trend toward apostasy, evil and unbelief in the world of men about us, and proposing an antidote for the safeguarding of our own lives. Instead of yielding to popular ungodliness we are to "exercise ourselves unto godliness." Instead of going off into scoffing unbelief we are to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord."

How shall we do this? What method shall we employ? Whatever else may seem needful, or desirable, this is certain: there is no possibility of our doing it apart from a Life of Prayer.

That subtle something for which there is no substitute, the dew of heaven resting upon our spirits, a sacred sweetness distilled in the soul—there is no provision for getting these ingredients of godliness into our lives save the quiet hour set apart for secret heart-communings with our glorified Christ. "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death"; that I may have in my life "the fruit of the Spirit (which) is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control"—no one has ever discovered, nor will one ever invent, a short cut to these gracious experiences and soul-qualities. He who would have them must travel the King's highway—a Life of Prayer.

Every day we need the touch of His hand upon our spirits, to keep us free from the feverish contagion of the world about us. Every day we need a renewed sense of His presence to maintain a life in conscious fellowship with Him. Every day we need to whisper in His ear, as though we had never done so before, our heart's love for Him, our humble dependence upon Him, that His Spirit may enfold us anew in the all-sufficiency of His all-seeing wisdom, protection and guidance. Such daily habits are the making of a life that, Enoch-like, walks with God.

CHAPTER II

HIS PROVISION FOR A LIFE OF PRAYER

"The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him"—Lam. 3:25.

The Scriptures abound with statements, akin to the above, calculated to keep constantly before us the fact that God encourages us to come to Him in prayer; that He expects us so to come; that He is disappointed when we fail to come. Jesus puts it yet more strongly, that the Father "seeks" those who will come to Him aright, "in spirit and in truth."

Due reflection upon these statements of the cause will surely lead us to see that the necessity for a Life of Prayer lies much deeper than in the mere stress of circumstances; deeper even than the native crying out of our own natures after God. There is something back of all this. It is the fact that prayer originates with God. Prayer is a part of His world-planning. Thus our practice of prayer is in no sense presumption. Quite the contrary. Prayer rests primarily in the fact that God has made provision for a Life of Prayer.

Prayer is, so to speak, a part of the machinery of the universe (no narrow conception this); as essential to the running of the world as are certain shafts and pulleys installed as an integral part of a factory's equipment. A master-mind planned and put them in place; it is not expected that things will go well, or the factory's work be done, apart from their use. No wonder if, when they are disregarded, the factory is inefficient. And no wonder if, when prayer as God's peculiar provision, is ignored, spurned, left in disuse, life's threads are torn, tangled and snarled. We have no room for complaint.

Meditation upon the matter discloses the following ways in which God has made provision for a Life of Prayer.

I—Man's Relationship to God as Creator and Redeemer

Prayer is essentially the maintaining of a relationship set up between man and God, first in CREATION, then in REDEMPTION.

1. In Creation, man was made in the image of God (Gen. 1.26,27). Man was kin to God. Adam was called, and was in truth, "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). The result was a perfect basis for prayer. Fellowship, communion —prayer in its highest form—naturally followed. It was as native to Adam as to Christ, the Son of God. In both cases it sprang from a oneness of nature and life. When sin severed this cord of relationship, fellowship ceased, because the basis for it was gone (Gen. 3:8-10).

2. In Man Today Prayer Remains a Rudimentary Instinct. Man everywhere, even in the lowest depths of human degradation, resorts to prayer. Yet this is true of no other creature; only man prays. In this fact is outstanding evidence of his divine origin. Prayer is a left-over from man's unfallen state of fellowship with God. It is a notable fact that there is scarcely a man but will, under stress of impending peril, of sudden overwhelming calamity, fall back upon prayer, however long neglected, as a creature-privilege, an appeal to his Creator.

3. Redemption Reestablishes Prayer Through a Restored Relationship to God. Objectively, the offense of sin is removed; God is propitiated; man is reconciled (1 John 2:2; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19). Subjectively, the New Birth replants in us both the nature and the life of God. We are, as Adam was, the sons of God:

> "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12, 13).

Recognizing that prayer roots itself in relationship, the redeemed of the Lord must now realize that, this relationship having been fully restored, it is incumbent upon them to exercise themselves fully in their prayer-privilege, to make this restored relationship a practical, vital, meaningful bond. Prayer must become as natural to us as to Adam, yea as to Christ Himself.

4. We are in a Covenant of Union and Communion. In a sense, all men may pray: it is a creature-privilege. But such prayer, sin having intervened, places God under no obligation. When, however, God enters into covenant agreement with man, prayer is the exercise of a

covenant-privilege. God has obligated Himself. It is a mutual matter. God must do His part. Thus prayer becomes more than mere prayer; it is communion and fellowship.

It was so at the beginning. Prayer is not mentioned in the Garden of Eden, but there was no want of intercourse. There existed a Covenant of Life. Within this covenant Adam and the Lord God exercised and enjoyed a beautiful, natural, unrestrained interchange of fellowship.

When God called Abraham, He extended to him a Covenant of Grace and Promise. Within this covenant Abraham set up an altar which became not merely a place of prayer but a trysting-place where the two parties to the agreement met in fellowship (Gen. 12:7, 8; 13:14-18; Chap. 15). This eventuated in the Lord coming to talk with Abraham "as friend talketh with friend" (Chap. 18). Thus Abraham is called "the Friend of God." It all grew out of a covenant.

Space precludes speaking at length of the covenant at Sinai whereby God brought His entire Old Testament people into fellowship with Himself, making provision through the Tabernacle and its appointments for their constant approach to Him and His Mercy Seat. Suffice it to say that this Old Covenant fellowship, typically taught and experienced in and through the Tabernacle, finds its fulfillment in the glorious facts of the New Covenant: Christ Himself has made full and final atonement; His blood is on the Mercy Seat (the throne of the universe); He Himself is there at God's right hand, our Advocate and Intercessor, the pledge of our acceptance; and now we enter, not by proxy, not in the person of another, a priest appointed for the purpose, but we ourselves come in our own person and right, unhindered and unaffrighted.

So now, rehearsing these facts of a fully restored relationship, which constitute a basis for "boldness" of approach, the Scriptures exhort us thus:

> "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having an High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:19-22).

And again, reminding us that our High Priest, having triumphantly "passed through the heavens," is there with our humanity, in perfect sympathy (Heb. 4:14, 15), the exhortation reads:

> "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

The Greek word, rendered "boldly," means "with free speech." We are invited to come and "tell it all," with no sense of reserve or restraint. Not an abject approach, servile and cringing, but as men made free with a glorious freedom, in full covenant right.

II—God's Relationship to Us as Father

The progress of revelation in this matter follows the progress of an unfolding relationship, and is of the utmost importance.

1. The Old Testament reveals the unity, majesty and sovereignty of God. The conception of His fatherhood is most infrequent (some fifteen times), and never as setting forth a personal relationship to an individual, but rather as a provider for His people in the works of redemption and providence. It is reserved for the New Testament to present Him as Father. Here it is the constant conception of Him (so called some two hundred and fifty times). Under the New Covenant this is His name because this is the relationship now set up.

2. Jesus' Ministry had a twofold purpose: (1) In His teaching, to reveal God as Father—His Father in an eternal relationship; our Father in a new-found relationship. (2) In His redemptive work, to effect a Father-and-son relationship, in all truth and reality, between God and sinful man. Thus He taught and thus He wrought. By gracious word and life He persuaded us of the fact of a Father's love; by gracious work and death He purchased the power to bestow and beget that relationship.

> "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12,13).

That the relationship is a reality, His Spirit in us attests:

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6).

3. JESUS' DISTINCTIVE TEACHING CONCERNING PRAYER is that we therein approach and address God as "OUR FATHER."

This is Jesus' one and only way of approaching God—"Father." Never does He give over this intimate, endearing, privileged and prevailing relationship for any far-off, high-sounding mode of address. Always He says "Father."

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight" (Matt. 11:25,26).

"Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always" (John 11:41,42).

"Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee" (John 17:1). "Holy Father" (vs. 11), "Righteous Father" (vs. 25).

It was thus that Jesus taught us to come:

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name" (Matt. 6:9).

"As He was praying . . . His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray . . . . And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father, which art in heaven" (Luke 11:1,2).

Conforming to Jesus' precept and practice all New Testament prayer thus addresses God. Indeed, the fact of His Fatherhood is so paramount as practically to supplant all other form of reference to Him throughout its Epistles. "Abba, Father" is the instinctive cry of the Spirit-born.*

From this Father-child relationship, it follows:

(1) It is no part of the purpose of prayer to give God information. Some prayers, addressing Him as Almighty, All-wise, etc., proceed as though He were ignorant. Very evidently such praying is intent upon effect with the people

*Note—While prayer to the Father is the normal form of address in the New Testament, it is not unscriptural to use the name of the Son in direct address. E.g., Acts 7:59, 60, R.V.; Acts 9:12, 14; 1 Cor. 1:2, R.V. The Holy Spirit is never so addressed.

rather than acceptability with God. It is presumptuous for a child so to speak to his Father. Says Jesus:

> "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him" (Matt. 6:8).

(2) In prayer we are to take our position as children, pleading to the full His Fatherhood. This argues one supreme essential of prayer: a child-like attitude of dependence upon Him as Father. It is thus we are encouraged to come:

> "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (Matt. 7:11).

III—The Use of the Name of the Son

In our previous chapter we saw the use of His name as a remarkable privilege accorded us. We are now to see it as a part of the provision for prevailing prayer, occasioning the most outstanding PROMISE of prayer, coupled with a corresponding RESPONSIBILITY.

These are found in our Lord's words:

> "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13,14).

1. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF "THE NAME." A name denotes a personality, either as an individual (given name) or in family relationship (surname or marriage name). It denotes what a person is—his character; what he has done—his work or achievement; what he is known for—his reputation or fame. In oriental usage, especially, names carry a deep significance, selected to particularly fit or describe a person as to appearance or character (see Adam, Isaac, Joshua, Elijah, Daniel, etc., in Young's Concordance, or a good Bible dictionary). Hence, God frequently changed them to suit a new character, role, or relationship to Himself (Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, Jacob to Israel, Simon to Peter). So *we* are to have "a new name" (Rev. 2:17), in keeping with our new relationship to God, residence in the Holy City, marriage to His Son, entitling us to His "new name" (see Rev. 3:12)—a name whose fullness of meaning is not now disclosed (Rev. 19:12).

The name of the Lord Jesus Christ, God-given, God-owned, comprises all that He is, has done or ever will do, Godward and manward—His person, redemptive work, present exalted position, and prospective glory.

Hence, because "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1:19), His "name" is truly "Wonderful." The Scriptures abound with titles and allusions, many and varied, in an attempt to set forth His person, position, power and preciousness.*

His, then, is "a name which is above every name" (Phil. 2:9). And that name is ours to use! It is one of the most precious and prevailing provisions for a Life of Prayer.

2. Our Right to Use His Name. This right is twofold. First, He left His name with us for this purpose. It is as though the most financially capable man of our community were to place in our hands a book of blank checks, signed by himself, bidding us fill them in as needed. Such is the language He uses: "Whatsoever ye shall ask (of the bank of heaven) in My name." We are somehow to arrive at the "amount" to be asked and present the request, as duly authorized, "in His name," the one name that is honored there. What a challenge to prayer!

"Whatsoever!" Limitless; yet not reckless. Limitless as to the power of the name we use; limited only by the possibilities of our asking in that name.

Further, then, our right to use His name rests in relationship, namely, that of our identification with Him. We belong to Him. His name is upon us as the husband's name is upon the wife. So our standing before God and our approach to His Mercy Seat is not in our own name or right but in the name and right of His Son by virtue of our identification with Him. "Whatsoever you shall ask on the ground of, and in keeping with, your union with Me, I will do."

It becomes very evident that this so great promise is not claimed by merely closing our prayer with the words, "This

*The author's exposition of Philippians, entitled "His In Joyous Experience," pages 43-46, gives a list of some two hundred and fifty such names and allusions. The reader should also make a study, with good concordance, of the use of "the name of the Lord" in Scripture.

we ask in Jesus' name." Such words are right and proper, but far more is intended. It involves: (1) the presenting of a name which is the most wonderful and efficacious in the whole world; (2) the presenting of ourselves as one with Him in the petitioning. It contemplates a Life of Prayer rather than an isolated act of prayer.

3. The Promise for Prayer in His Name. Attached to this provision for the use of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, so very wonderful is it, stands the most startling, challenging promise ever uttered in the teaching of prayer. And to make it doubly sure, lest, hestitating to believe it in its absoluteness, our faltering faith should think He had misspoken, He repeats and restates. Note the four elements common to both verses (13, 14): 1—"Whatsoever" ("anything"); 2—"ye shall ask"; 3—"in My name"; 4—"I will do."

A priceless coin of heaven, stamped on either side with the imprimatur of our Lord, handed to us there in the Upper Room. Only our lack of faith prevents our using it as the daily currency of our Life of Prayer here upon earth, making proof in practical experience of the riches of its promise, up to its full face value.

4. The Responsibility for its Use. So great a provision is not optional as to its use. It is a part of our Lord's "goods," left with us for trading, for the carrying on of His business. His promised "That will I do" is the very thing He wants to get done. He will do it—"if." If we ask and make it possible to Him. If we fail to ask, what? His provision is nullified; His plan is balked; the thing is not done.

Note well where the "if" lies. It is hard by our door. "If ye." One man in the Gospels made the mistake of putting the "if" at Jesus' door. "If Thou canst do anything." Quickly Jesus threw that "if" back where it belonged: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9:22, 23).

"If ye ask, I will do." That means that the first move lies with us. It is ours to initiate. Power for the doing of things we could never do is placed at our disposal. It is released only "if" we call it into action. What responsibility!

To illustrate. Yonder at the station stands a train, its engine fired and athrob with restrained power. Suppose the engineer approaches and says, "Engine, why don't you pull the train out of here?" The engine might properly retort, "I will if—if you ask me. Not otherwise." And it might add, "You cannot move the train; but if you will climb into the cab, pull the lever and open the throttle, I will do what you cannot do." It is the engineer's first move. And by so moving, power infinitely beyond his own is set at work.

Such is the Christian's staggering responsibility in the face of this provision and promise. What power of His remains impotent; what plans of His remain thwarted; what souls of His purchasing remain unsaved—back of our undischarged "if"?

IV—The Power of Prayer—Through the Spirit

The gracious provisions of prayer actively involve the entire Trinity: (1) We come to God as our Father; (2) in the name of the Son; (3) in, by and through the Holy Spirit. We have seen the first two. The latter is equally clear in Scripture:

> "We worship God in the Spirit" (Phil. 3:3).
> "Praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20).
> "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18). Note the three Persons of prayer, as above, in this one statement.
> "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18).

1. The Spirit is the "Sending" Power in Us. Were we left to ourselves and our own effort in prayer, we could not be heard. We would be as impotent as a radio set or a telephone without electric current. As electricity gives carrying power to the human voice, projecting it for thousands of miles, so the Holy Spirit performs a like service in winging our worship, petitions and aspirations "to the Father." We may be well assured that, "praying in the Spirit," they do not fall short of His throne of heavenly Grace.

Yet the dominant thought, from the metaphor used, is not one of distance. That which enables us to "reach" the Father, giving us "access" to Him, is the Spirit-quality.

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

2. The Spirit is the Prompting, Guiding Power in Us. Thus we are taught, much to our comfort and encouragement:

> "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to (the will of) God" (Rom. 8:26, 27).

Four things are here concerning the Spirit's prayer-help: (1) Its necessity—our weakness and ignorance. (2) Its nature—He prays in us and for us. (3) Its assured acceptance—His mind, wrought in us, is known to God. (4) Its assured answer—He prays for us "according to God."

The picture is made complete by the statement, in verse 34, that Christ is our Intercessor above us as the Spirit is our Intercessor within us. They two are in perfect accord. Their ministries are complementary. Together they secure our success in a Life of Prayer.

Prayer, then, primarily and in a very true sense, is a matter of divine activity. The Spirit prompts it in us. He prays it through us. He guides it into complete accord with One yonder on the throne, that One being equally and correspondingly occupied on our behalf.

True prayer, then, is a cycle, originating in Heaven, in the mind and heart of God, brought to earth by the Spirit, prompted in the human heart that is yielded to Him, borne back on Spirit wings to the Father, accepted of Him and answered. Assuredly. In such prayer the divine mind and the human blend as one.

This explains the startling, superhuman boldness of some pray-ers. They are borne upon the stream of the divine mind and will. For example, Elijah, asking for a drought that meant famine for three and a half years. What man of us could ask this, realizing it would ruin our country, our relatives, neighbors and friends? Yet as Elijah, with breaking heart, prayed over the sin and apostasy of Israel, a conviction was born in his soul that there was just one cure—the disaster of drought and famine. It did not origi-

nate, so it has always seemed to us, with Elijah. It was Spirit-suggested. It was the thing God proposed and wished to do. He had found a co-worker upon earth through whom He could do it. It was the truest of prayer, prayed "in the Spirit" and "according to God." He prays best who keeps his heart open worldward to the sins and sorrows of earth and his mind open heavenward to the will and remedy of God.

V—The Program of Prayer—Matt. 6:6

In one brief verse our Lord Jesus has given us a specific program for a Life of Prayer, the practical wisdom of which we do well to note and heed:

> "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6).

An analysis yields a succession of six steps, suggestively presented to the eye by the initial P:

1. The Period of Prayer—"When thou prayest." To succeed the pray-er should have a specified time devoted to its exercise, a period definitely and sacredly set apart for this purpose. It should be a habit of the soul, as regular as eating and sleeping for the body. Through the observance of such a time prayer comes to be a trysting, an appointed meeting between our Lord and ourselves. To its daily return He looks forward as eagerly as we. For lo, He has a child who eagerly covets His fellowship at a set period. He will not disappoint him. He reserves for him His choicest. He will take him, Abraham-like, into His confidence. And so the bond strengthens, till he who prays is in truth "the friend of God."

2. The Place of Prayer—"Enter into thy closet." Every pray-er should have a place, be it only a chair or a corner, where he is accustomed to meeting his Lord. The very law of association, so strong in our make-up, dictates this. The place made sacred by sweet disclosures of truth or strong wrestlings of spirit—it is in such a spot the soul can best gird itself for prayer with the sense of truly succeeding. Out from such a closet, from its habitual meeting in private, personal interview with the Father, one can go

to face a world of sin, of difficulty and discouragement, undaunted and undismayed.

3. The Privacy of Prayer—"And when thou hast shut thy door." This is a difficult thing to do. It is something few succeed in doing, and still fewer are careful to do. Many seem to assume that prayer is like a one-way telephone conversation: call Him on the phone, tell Him what you want, and depart without making sure that He has heard or waiting for reply. Such an approach will prove barren of results.

Our proneness to distraction by wandering, scattering thoughts (shall we say, Satan-sent?) as soon as we settle ourselves for prayer, was well illustrated some time since by a cartoonist. He pictured a congregation bowed in prayer; a beautiful summer day; the windows lowered; and through the openings come insects that buzz about the worshippers' heads, distracting their thoughts. Women are disturbed by: "Wonder how my dinner is coming along"; "What shall I wear to the party"; "What a horrible hat"; etc. Men, by: "Wonder if my stock will go up"; "Wish I could land that job"; etc. Boys are attacked by the baseball bug, etc. The futility of prayer when the door is not shut, that the whole being may be given over to audience with God!

On the other hand Chinese Gordon exemplified so well these essential principles of successful prayer. Out on his military campaigns this Christian General observed the period, place, and privacy of prayer. A white handkerchief outside his tent door was the signal by which all knew Chinese Gordon was on no account to be disturbed. He was holding audience with the Captain of his Salvation.

4. The Practice of Prayer—"Pray." Now that you are in position to pray, proceed. Really do it. Too frequently we essay to engage in prayer and just when we begin to feel the sacred glow of fellowship and communion, the assurance that we are touching the Throne, we rise and depart. We were just beginning to succeed. Having spent the time gaining a hearing with our God, we should have tarried to make use of it.

Some say, with lament, "I cannot pray." Of course not. But you can if you will practice yourself in it, going through

its simplest exercises faithfully. Here is a child who says she cannot play the piano. But let her practice diligently and intelligently, and in a few weeks' time she will surprise you by her facility in playing. So any child of God can pray if he will practice himself in it.

5. The Persons in Prayer—"Pray to thy Father which is in secret." Prayer is not a subjective exercise for personal uplift. It is one person in converse with another. The boastful Pharisee whom Jesus pictures as standing and "praying with himself" failed to pray at all. Prayer is nothing if it claims not the ear of One we delight to call "Father." Waiting in His presence what heavenly fragrance, what divine stillness, calming fears, banishing unworthy purposes, supplanting weakness with strength, is distilled into the soul.

"Who is in secret"; hence the program Jesus laid down for a successful Life of Prayer. As we go into the secret we find Him there. That is the essence of it all. Then necessarily follows,

6. The Promise of Prayer—"Thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." It cannot be otherwise. It may be in outward circumstance, in such answer to prayer as thousands of God's children have rejoiced to receive as "reward" for waiting upon Him. It may be in the evident transformation of face and life. It was this that Moses brought with him from the mount of closeted communion, yet in beautiful unconsciousness: "Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone." Thus would our Father "openly" glorify Himself today, in the midst of materialistic unbelief, in the lives of His praying people.

Too infrequently do we make use of that hymn in which a native Christian of India has embodied the priceless lessons learned by making prayer in all reality the program of her life.

In the Secret of His Presence

In the secret of His presence, how my soul delights to hide!
Oh, how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus' side!
Earthly cares can never vex me, neither trials lay me low;
For when Satan comes to tempt me, to the secret place I go.

When my soul is faint and thirsty, 'neath the shadow of His wing
There is cool and pleasant shelter, and a fresh and crystal spring;
And my Saviour rests beside me, as we hold communion sweet;
If I tried, I could not utter what He says when thus we meet.

Only this I know: I tell Him all my doubts, my griefs and fears:
Oh, how patiently He listens! and my drooping soul He cheers:
Do you think He ne'er reproves me? what a false friend He would be,
If He never, never told me of the sins which He must see.

Would you like to know the sweetness of the secret of the Lord?
Go and hide beneath His shadow: this shall then be your reward;
And whene'er you leave the silence of that happy meeting place,
You must mind and bear the image of the Master in your face.

Ellen Lakshmi Goreh.

VI—The Prescription of Prayer—At All Times

"Men ought (must) always to pray" (Luke 18:1).
"With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons" (Eph. 6:18, R.V.).

(1) It is NOT OPTIONAL, used or not at pleasure or whim. We are not to pray today because we feel like it and omit it tomorrow because not so inclined. Prayer is an essential, a constant of spiritual life. So we read:

"In everything by prayer and supplication . . . make your requests known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).
"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

If this is true, and is to prove true in experience, evidently the Life of Prayer calls for and includes certain other kindred spiritual exercises and states that nurture, sustain and promote its uninterrupted flow. That is to say,

(2) It is NOT ISOLATED. It cannot go alone, unsupported by certain aides. Two of these aides, or aids, are mentioned in the context of the above quotations. In both instances they are on either side of prayer, as though buttressing, protecting and supporting it. Or, shall we say, the three form the essential, inseparable ingredients of the PRESCRIPTION of prayer. Let us place them side by side:

Phil. 4:6	1 Thess. 5:16-18
"In nothing be anxious."	"Rejoice evermore."
"In everything by prayer and supplication."	"Pray without ceasing."
"With thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."	"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Here, then, are the three sister graces of a Life of Prayer.

1. ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING. Instead, and this is the only means for precluding anxiety and worry, we are to "Rejoice evermore." The glorious facts of our faith are such—God is our Father; Eternal Life is ours through our Lord Jesus Christ; He ever lives to intercede for us; "We know that all things are working together for our good," and "No good thing will He withhold from" us—He has left no room nor right to worry. To do so is only to doubt and hurt Him.

Rather, He bids us supplant worry by being "always joyful." That this is the privilege of the Christian, made possible "always" because we are always "in Christ," is the standing marvel and miracle of Christian experience:

> "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I will say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).
>
> "And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God" (Deut. 16:11).

Meditation upon this matter will yield a profitable realization of how far short we come of Christian duty and privilege when we fail to "Rejoice." But our present point of concern is that any faltering of the spirit of rejoicing, making room for the spirit of worry, is hostile and fatal to our prayer-life.

2. PRAYERFUL FOR EVERYTHING. Prayer is a creature-instinct in man. With the twice-born it takes its instinctive place in practice. Not as a last resort, driven to it by dire circumstance—shame on us that it should ever be so—but the spontaneous turning of the child-spirit to the Father, pouring out its heart-interests, whatsoever of joy or sorrow, of need or dread, of aspiration or expectation, into His sympathetic Father-ear.

How slow we are to learn this lesson. How frequently we have struggled along, in our own creature-strength, alone, until the seriousness of our situation constrained to prayer. And, graciously, our God heard and brought relief. But oh, the reproach of spirit that we turned to Him as a last resort. The delight of prayer, its joyous exhilaration, comes when, through oft-repeated recourse to it, it becomes the involuntary attitude and appeal of the heart. Then we understand what it means to "Pray without ceasing."

A dear friend said to the writer the other day, with evident joy over his attainment: "I have found that I can pray effectively while driving my auto." (He is a doctor, under daily necessity of driving.) Certainly. One can think while driving; why can he not pray, think Godward, if his spirit so prompts? Likewise, "at all seasons."

3. THANKFUL FOR ANYTHING. "With thanksgiving let your requests be made known." That is, the giving of praise and thanks to God is an essential ingredient of our approach to Him. If we cannot say "Thank you" to our Father for blessings and benefits bestowed out of His constant love and thought for us, why should He trouble Himself with our requests, answers to which will be received with like unthankfulness.

No greater barrier to progress in prayer can be set up than ingratitude toward God. It is said that two angels came forth from Heaven, each with a basket, the one commissioned to gather up the petitions of God's people, the other their praises. The first returned with his basket overflowing; so many requests did men have to make of God. The other brought his basket back almost empty; so little did men have of praise to God. It is altogether a fault that our hearts do not constantly overflow with thanksgiving to Him "who daily loadeth us with benefits."

The secret of thankfulness is: (1) The discerning of our Father's hand of blessing in the simple things of life, the daily commonplaces, if you please, in which He delights to show His love. No concern of ours too small for His interest; then no blessing of His too small for our grateful notice. (2) The resolute "In everything give thanks," persuaded that if this is His "requirement (will) in Christ Jesus," His all-wise plans for us will always furnish a reasonable basis for it, even though our feeble sense fail to see it, "for we walk by faith, not by sight."

Here, then, is the prescription of prayer, God-compounded, with three ingredients, each one essential, which we are to take "as directed" if we hope to enter into a successful and satisfying Life of Prayer.

VII—The Practice of Prayer—Under All Circumstances

It remains for us to see that God's provision for a Life of Prayer is an all-comprehensive "coverage"; that by it He proposes to care for every necessity, every exigency of our earthly existence, as it may arise.

Jesus taught that we must always pray and couched the teaching in a parable calculated to encourage us so to do under all circumstances—Luke 18:1-8. The woman He pictures is circumstanced most adversely: she is hard pressed by her adversary and is compelled to appeal her case to an unjust judge "who had no fear of God and no respect for man." She is in a hard way, yet she secures justice, righting her wrong. By contrast, how much more shall a child of God prevail, coming with whatever circumstances to One who is kind and good, as well as just, our Heavenly Father. Even though He ask us to share for a time His patient long-suffering with evil, His answer is sure (vs. 7, 8).

A survey of the Scriptures leads to the inescapable conviction that every circumstance is included in the gracious provisions of prayer. Our God has left no room or occasion for grovelling doubt or grumbling discontent. Whatever the state of affairs, His hand holds open the door of our prayer closet, reminding us that we "ought always to pray." For example:

1. In Trouble—Needing Deliverance.

"Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me" (Ps. 50:15).

"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him" (Ps. 91:15).

"The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles" (Ps. 34:17; see also vs. 15).

"In the day of my trouble I will call upon Thee: for Thou wilt answer me" (Ps. 86:7).

2. In Sickness—Needing Restoration to Health.

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the

prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:13-16).

"If ye shall ask any thing in My name, I will do it" (John 14:14).

3. In Adversity—Needing Financial Relief.

"For the Lord heareth the poor" (Ps. 69:33a).

"He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer" (Ps. 102:17).

"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

4. In Peril—Needing Protection.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence" (Ps. 91:1-3).

"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance" (Ps. 32:6, 7).

Consider also the scriptures for Deliverance, above.

5. In Doubt—Needing Guidance.

"Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jer. 33:3).

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that given to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (Jas. 1:5).

"He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer thee. And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it" (Isa. 30:19b, 21a).

6. In Sin—Needing Salvation.

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10:13).

"Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:6,7).

"Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously" (Hos. 14:2a).

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:13, 14).

7. In Spiritual Dearth—Needing Revival.

In such need we are inspired by the example of God's people, in their prayer:

"Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee? Shew us Thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us Thy salvation" (Ps. 85:6, 7).

"O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years" (Hab. 3:2).

We are spurred to prayer by the sense of helplessness in the face of conditions about us:

"It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law" (Ps. 119:126).

Our faith is also reassured by God's many gracious promises and purposes of salvation, e.g.,

"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

"Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?" (Ezek. 18:23).

CHAPTER III

HIS RESPONSE TO A LIFE OF PRAYER

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us"—Eph. 3:20.

Further meditation upon the foregoing study will suggest the fact that prayer is not of an unvarying uniformity in its expression, but rather falls naturally into different phases, or parts, according to the prevailing purpose in view. Our approach to God the Father calls for adoration and worship. Our use of "the name" leads on to petition and intercession. And the needful accompaniments of prayer call for confession and thanksgiving.

Paul exhorts "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2:1). This listing covers a specific field, namely, "for all men," hence it does not include worship.

Matthew Henry gives five parts of prayer: Adoration, Confession, Petition, Thanksgiving, Intercession.

Self—Others—Himself

Evidently there are degrees of ascent in prayer. There are steps of progress from the lower to the higher. These it is our present purpose to trace. Not that we outgrow the simpler forms of prayer—never that; but through these, as our spiritual life expands in purpose and enriches in experience of Him, we find ourselves led on into the loftier reaches of prayer-attainment.

Prayer, in its simplest conception, is asking. This is our child-privilege. In it we are occupied largely with ourselves and our needs. But as we grow into a realization of our spiritual relationships—to Christ our Head; to one another, as members of His body; to His Kingdom and to the world of men for whom He died—prayer becomes more than a privilege. It is nothing short of a serious responsibility. The soul has passed from mere asking to the business of interceding. Moreover, the center of concern has shifted—shifted from the needs of self to the need of others.

Yet, great as is this step, there is one higher. It is seeking His face, for His own sake. Herein we are engaged in communing with Him, holding fellowship with Him, occupied with Himself.

As in this prayer-progression our center of interest changes, from self to others, from others to Himself; so likewise is there a corresponding progress in His response. It may be stated thus: In response to our asking, He gives; to our interceding, He works; to our communing, He reveals.

I—Prayer as Petition

The prayer-teaching of Scripture is perfectly plain as to the intimate, cause-and-effect connection in the Christian's experience between asking and having. How altogether unwholesome if the child never asked, and the father never gave. Our Heavenly Father is more eager than we to have this bond maintained. Hence, we are taught:

1. We Have Because We Ask. A simple solution of need, surely; yet it is supported by many scriptures. Here are a few:

> "Ask, and it shall be given you . . . . For every one that asketh receiveth" (Matt. 7:7, 8).
> "If any of you lack . . . . let him ask of God" (Jas. 1:5).
> "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee" (Jer. 33:3).

Not only is this true; it is so essential and fundamental to the divine economy that

2. We Have Not Because We Ask Not. Jesus said, "If ye ask . . . . I will do." James, therefore, makes bold to trace our impoverishment, our going without, to just one source—a lack of desire Godward.

> "Ye have not because ye ask not" (Jas. 4:2).

The context suggests all manner of striving, even to wanton violence, in order to obtain. Why will a man resort to everything, rather than ask of God? Strange, is it not? And all to no avail. For "God resisteth the proud," too proud to seek blessing at His hands. Should He not then, wisely, checkmate His child's effort to have apart from his Father, till he comes to himself and takes the child's rightful attitude of asking?

This he does, for our sake, for His own sake, in the interests of the bond between us. But more. The same considerations carry Him one step further in the matter.

3. We Have Not Because We Ask Amiss. We have learned the lesson of asking; this is qualified by yet one other. We have not sifted our motives in asking. We have not brought them to Him for purifying. We have seized upon prayer as a means of gratifying self. So James continues:

> "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (Jas. 4:3).

"Lusts," in the Greek, has no reference to the baser passions, simply to the self-cravings of our natures, seeking gratification. We ask because we want for ourselves. Such prayer is poorly disguised selfishness, parading under the cloak of piety.

To illustrate. Could we pray for a hundred dollar coat and expect to receive it? We need a coat, but why a hundred dollar coat? Analyzing the matter we see that the difficulty in getting it does not lie with God. Out of His abundant resources He could readily supply us with a five hundred dollar coat. Yes, He would gladly do it, for, as a Father, He delights to bestow the best. But the difficulty lies in us. Our praying for such a coat would be prompted by our "own lusts." This it is that precludes God's giving it in answer to prayer.

But now, as we continue to pray—and this is the point of the illustration—our answer comes within us. Not receiving our request, our praying intensifies. We pass from "asking" to "seeking"; from seeking to "knocking." This is God's opportunity. He searches the heart. He shows us our selfishness. Our prayer-life is purged of self-seeking. Our prayer-motives are purified. We say, "Lord, not a hundred dollar coat; any coat You, in Your love and wisdom, see fit to send me."

Dear reader, this is the primal benefit accruing from a consistent Life of Prayer. In it the chief reason for unanswered prayer is removed. When our Father, through access to our hearts afforded Him in prayer, has secured a right inner state, He can so very readily care for our outer estate.

4. Asking Aright We Have "Above All We Ask." When our hearts are cleansed of self-hindrance, we are brought out into a large place where His giving far exceeds

our asking. Not that He always gives what we ask. To do so would leave no room for His divine wisdom and love. He always gives "good things." What we ask, not now in "lust" but in short-sightedness, may be far from good for us. What He has to give may be infinitely better.

Thus a true Life of Prayer is not so much "getting" God to do something—though it is this; but more, it is "letting" Him do in accordance with His "exceeding-abundantly-above" ability. Thanks be unto Him for His answers to prayer "above all we ask or think." Yes, and thanks when His answers seem so adverse to the tenor of our asking. His ways are ways of wisdom; they are always best.

An illustration in point is the experience of Paul—2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Prompted by a physical necessity, "a thorn in the flesh," Paul petitioned the Lord for a physical benefit. He asked to have it removed. He asked, without answer. He asked again, and again. The Lord was preparing him for an answer "above" his asking. The Lord wished to give him, not a physical, but a spiritual benefit. He left the thorn with him, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." This answer above his asking proved to be one of the unspeakable blessings of the Apostle's life, a perpetual bond between himself and his Lord, of which he testifies:

> "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 12:9, 10).

II—Prayer as Intercession

In the act of praying there is a centripetal force that tends ever to draw it in toward our normal center of thinking, namely, our natural concern for self and self's interest—my health, my family, my business, my finances, my Church, my ——. The next time you "say your prayers" note how readily, yea unconsciously, the exercise gravitates to a routine rehearsal of these things in the ears of the Lord. It is the line of least effort and thought. But it spells spiritual stagnation.

The antidote is in a Life of Intercession—the resolute resolve to pray less for self, more for others. No more wholesome, broadening step could be taken. It lifts us out

of the wearisome circle of self. It expands our horizon with world-wide sympathies and interests. It squares our prayer-life with the fact that "the field is the world." It gives us a loving interest in all men, saved and unsaved, near at hand and remote. It makes us partners in the greatest undertakings, the Gospel, the Church, the enterprise of missions, to the ends of the earth.

1. Our Position as Intercessors. When the disciples besought Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray," He led them at once into the necessity of using prayer to meet the needs of others:

> "And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth" (Luke 11:5-8).

The heart of Jesus' picture is this: He places us between two friends, the one in need, the other abundantly able to supply that need. We are the go-between. To know men and their need; to know the Lord and His Grace; again, to be touched with the urgency of the need, and to believe implicitly in the power that will supply the need at our request—this constitutes our call to intercession.

And what is it but another way of describing our office as priests? To know both men and God; to be touched with man's dire need and helplessness, and be privileged to lay hold of God on his behalf—this is the position of priest into which we have been officially inducted.

Again, viewing our responsibility through Old Testament imagery, we read:

> "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that are Jehovah's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give Him no rest" (Isa. 62:6, 7, R.V.).

"The Lord's remembrancers!" What a calling! As though He invited us to keep Him ever mindful of His solemn, covenant promises. Having bound Himself thereby, He bids us share the obligation by pleading it in His ears.

2. In Intercession We Work. That we grasp this is so very essential. Prayer is an appointed means for getting work done. Work that we could do no other way. Work that otherwise will not get done. Moreover, we are not working alone; we are working with Him. Doubtless there is no way in which we work so hand-in-hand with Christ Jesus our Lord as in praying for others.

In the hour that Jesus passed through the heavens, and was seated at the Father's right hand, He became the Great Intercessor. His redemptive work accomplished, He began His intercessory work. The one portraiture we have of Him there through these centuries is that "He ever liveth to make intercession." The Gospels contain a record "of all that Jesus began to do" (Acts 1:1). This work He is carrying on from Heaven, through intercession.

Believers, united to Him by the Spirit, partakers of His nature and life, co-partners with Him in the Gospel and its ministration, He has called and qualified us to share His age-long work. And what a work it is. For, while we work with Him, He, in response, works through us and far beyond us, in ways past tracing out.

3. Through Our Intercession He Works. Jesus, about to leave His disciples, said of the believer: "Greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father" (there to take up this intercessory work). But in His very next words these "greater works" are shown to be not ours, but His in response to our asking. Let us write it thus:

> "Because I am going to My Father, and (through My presence there) whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that I will do" (John 14:12, 13).

The "greater works" are made possible by His presence with the Father; they are made actual by His working in response to our asking.

As soon as Christ had ascended, this very thing was demonstrated. The Book of Acts—deeds—is a remarkable record of the Apostles and early Church, in which two prominent features are these: (1) They Prayed. The Church began with prayer (1:14); they continued in prayer (2:42); the leaders put prayer before preaching (6:4); they were endued with the Spirit by prayer (8:15); their leaders were set apart by prayer (6:6; 13:3); etc., etc. (2) The Lord Worked. He sent the Holy Spirit; He

brought conviction to three thousand hearts; He added daily to the Church; He healed the lame man; He did wonders in His name; He sent His angel to release His Apostles, and later Peter, from prison; He effected from heaven the conversion of Saul; He constrained Peter to go and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. The Apostolic missionaries, being sent forth with undergirding prayer (Acts 13:2-4), came back and "rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles" (Acts 21:19, R.V.).

Thus it was intended to be throughout the centuries. Thus it is meant to be in the twentieth century. The history of the Church should be the record of the Lord working through, yet above and beyond our working, in response to believing prayer.

What a limitless field for service is opened by this provision to every believer, once he accepts his calling to intercession. The circumstances of his life may seemingly hem him in to a narrow routine, possibly secular in the extreme. Yet here is a service that lifts him out of all such limitations, makes his horizon coextensive with earth's remotest bounds, sends him far afield to the achieving of world-wide victories. In it his Lord says to him, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Rev. 3:8).

(1) He may multiply his own life many fold. Eager to do the Lord's work, yet denied the privilege of going in person, he finds the Lord has made explicit provision for others to go through his interceding.

> "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matt. 9:37, 38).

The Lord invites us, through a deep concern for the harvest, to ask Him to send enough laborers to care for it. "If ye ask, I will do." Today, on all sides, there is complaint of serious shortage. If men so see it, how much more the Lord? But He made ample provision. He is waiting upon us, His intercessors. In testimony of this read the incident on "Pastorless Churches," page 93.

The writer had hoped to be on the mission field. Denied the privilege, he has had the joy of seeing many young lives claimed for the Lord. They have yielded themselves, trained and gone. Still others are going. Untold others

might have gone had we matched the challenge of the Lord of the harvest.

(2) Again, the believer may project himself into the field through intercession. Going in person, one experiences the limitations of language, locality, prejudice, opposition, etc. Going by way of the Throne, through the power of His Spirit, we may touch lives, transform situations, break down opposition, achieve results that could not be wrought through our personal presence or human effort. Let us remember, wherever we can send a thought, Christ can send a blessing. Radio is no more efficient for reaching distant places and peoples than the instrument of intercession in the hands of persevering faith, flung forth from a heart burning with divine yearning.

III—Prayer as Communion

In response to our asking, He gives. In response to our interceding, He works. But now, the soul mounts up through these privileged forms of prayer to a yet higher—that of communion.

In Communion we are occupied, not with His gifts, nor yet with His graciously promised works, but with Himself. We seek, not His benefits, but His own Self. This is aptly illustrated by the story of the little boy coming one morning to his father's study. To the father's question, "What do you want, my boy?", the reply was, "Oh nothing; I just wanted to be with you."

Says the Apostle John, doubtless out of experience, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). As God saw Adam unsatisfied and alone in the midst of an animal creation, no kindred spirit with whom to commune, calling for the creation of one like unto himself with whom he could hold fellowship, so is it with every born-again one. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." No thing can answer to or satisfy the spirit. There is no kinship. The heart craves communion. The soul is starved that does not seek and find fellowship with God. "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek" (Ps. 27:8).

But it means far more than merely "to be with Him," wonderful as is the privilege. It is our Lord's expressed purpose to manifest Himself unto us, as not unto the world.

"I will manifest *Myself* to him." This is the greatest reward of prayer. Here prayer rises to its highest and best. It does not longer depend upon human wisdom in asking. It is tapping the resources of "Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think." It is laying hold of the mind of Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." In it human initiative and desire are exchanged for the divine. Confessedly it opens to us a field of limitless possibility.

An illustration may be found in the use of wireless at sea. Someone aboard ship wishes information. A question is sent out and the answer received over the air. How wonderful! Who in our day can reasonably doubt the reality of prayer? But such use of the radio is too limited; it has brought in nothing but what was initiated by those aboard. Let the instrument be opened and adjusted to receive what is in the air for them, and lo, bits of world-intelligence, things unknown and unsought, come trooping in to them. Such preeminently is prayer when it rises to its highest prerogative.

God's Response to a Life of Prayer

Very evidently we have come to the place where prayer can no longer be regarded as isolated acts of petitioning, in an attempt to get something from God. It is meant to be so much more. Prayer is a life, constantly aspiring to live in conscious communion with God.

"Friendship with Jesus,
Fellowship divine,—
Oh, what blessed sweet communion!
Jesus is a friend of mine."

This is our side of it. From His side, what? He has purposes entirely beyond our ken. "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). The exposing of mind and heart to Him in prayer-fellowship furnishes Him the opportunity to reveal Himself as in no other way. The beneficent results, who can anticipate? Carried out of the narrowness and shallowness of ourselves into the breadth and depth of Himself, what surprises await us. Thus prayer is God's provision for further and fuller revelation.

What the consistent practicing of a Life of Prayer has

meant to others it may, and should, mean to us. For our encouragement we consider the following:

1. Jesus Christ Our Lord. Jesus lived a Life of Prayer, with such devotion that His disciples, seeking to emulate His example, requested: "Lord, teach us to pray." Yet the Gospel narratives are singularly lacking in any record of specific answers to His prayers. Why? His prayer-life was one of constant communion with His Father, in loving, filial dependence upon Him. His ministry was the equally constant response of the Father, manifesting Himself to Him, speaking His words and working His works through His Son. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" (John 14:10).

Turning now to specific experiences in His prayer-life, we find the following:

First, at His baptism, the record reads:

> "Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:21, 22).

There is no hint that Jesus asked for this. It is not that the bestowment of the Spirit and accompanying commendation were an answer to prayer. They were the Father's response to His Son; His superabundant blessing upon One who had put Himself in the way of blessing.

Second, the Sermon on the Mount was preceded by an "all night" with the Father.

> "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12).

This matchless sermon has been the admiration of the ages, yet men are wont to miss the fact, carefully called to our attention by Luke, that its words of wisdom, correction, instruction and authority are the Father's response to a protracted communing with Him. What might not the Father do for other sons to whom the same privilege is freely accorded?

Third, the Transfiguration. Of this gracious and glorious experience it is recorded:

> "He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistening" (Luke 9:28, 29).

"As He prayed" there was vouchsafed to Him, not an answer, but a response—a response suited to the Son's need in that crisis hour. Facing the Cross, He was given a foregleam of the glory that awaited Him beyond. The disciples "saw His glory" and heard the accrediting voice, "This is My beloved Son: hear Him." He was transformed through prayer. What encouragement for us to seek our Father's face at all times.

2. ABRAHAM. Here is a life with but one explanation. It is the unfolding of a fellowship with God. Even its failures are recorded to give added emphasis to this fact; they occur where communion is broken off. The story of his life is comprehended in: faith in God, separation unto God, communion with God, obedience to God, all summarized in the title "the friend of God."

As we have seen, prayer first became a mutual matter, a communion, in the covenant relationship of Abraham and his Lord. In response "the Lord appeared unto him" in an intimacy of fellowship anticipative of "the days of His flesh" (Gen. 18:1 ff). He supped with him, a beautiful picture of New Covenant fellowship (see Rev. 3:20). Then, as He was leaving for His inspection of Sodom's wickedness, He said:

> "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" (Gen. 18:17).

How wonderful a result of communion with God! It was nothing Abraham had asked or sought. Fellowship had established a bond that constrained the Lord to this piece of confidence with His friend. And, be it noted, it also emboldened Abraham for a remarkable bit of intercession, growing out of it (Gen. 18:23-32). The scene concludes:

> "And the Lord went His way, as soon as He had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place" (Gen. 18:33).

3. MOSES. In many respects Moses is the most remarkable exponent of prayer in the Old Testament. In this he is a type of Christ. (1) He is led into a life of communion with the Lord. (2) He becomes the great intercessor. And, like Abraham, the latter grew out of the former.

What communings characterized the forty years of retirement we may only conjecture; but it was in response to them that the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3:2). In what followed there is naught of Moses' asking; it is altogether beyond his asking or thinking, yes, even contrary to it.

(1) The Lord revealed Himself; and the experience was so wonderful that we read:

> "And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God" (Ex. 3:6).

(2) He revealed His plans, taking Moses into His confidence (vv. 7-9). (3) He proposed that Moses become partner with Him for the carrying out of His purposes (vs. 10 ff). (4) This experience altered his entire life's course. He moved forward by a divine plan, not of his own devising. Having seen the Lord, "he endured as seeing Him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27).

Many times did the Lord vouchsafe guidance and direction to His servant in the supplying of His people's need. Then, chief of all, came the two protracted audiences in the mount. Descending from these prolonged communings, his face was radiant with heavenly light.

4. ELIJAH. There is a rugged boldness about this prophet's prayer-life that could come only from intimate communion with the Lord. Out of a confidence begotten of heavenly converse he asked with a daring scarce equalled anywhere. Lest he seem to us of another mould, we read for our encouragement:

> "Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (Jas. 5:17, 18).

The end of that trial of faith came with a spectacular demonstration of power on Carmel. The Lord God heard and answered with heaven-sent fire. And then, altogether apart from his asking, the end of the prophet's career came in a climax of power and glory, a chariot of fire sent to carry him home. It was the Lord's response in signal testimony to a life lived in separation to his Lord as well as in opposition to the infidelity of his day.

5. DANIEL. Daniel's was a life of utmost devotion to his God. It centered wholly in Him. In intimate communings with the Lord he sought to know His mind and with equal fidelity to do His will. Resolutely determining at the outset, in the midst of adverse circumstances, to be separated unto his God and well-pleasing unto Him, he grew in favor with God and in esteem with men.

Daniel's prayer-life was seemingly its dominant characteristic, its ruling passion. When he had risen to the premiership of the realm, his political enemies plotted against him. They found but one vulnerable point—his habit of prayer. They acted upon the conviction that he would continue in it at all costs, even to death itself. And he did. But God's answer to such devotion was his deliverance from the lions and his enemies' destruction by them, much to the glorification of His name and worship under the king's edict.

Daniel's whole life, with the marvelous book that bears his name, is a remarkable testimony, not to the fact that God answers prayer, but to the manner in which He responds to such a life in the revealing of His mind and will. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant" (Ps. 25:14). The word for "secret" means counsel, the intimate converse of confidants or familiar friends. Doubtless this very scripture was Daniel's frequent inspiration in prayer. It was thus he came to know the secret of the king's dream and its interpretation. It was thus that the Lord entrusted him with the revealing of His prophetic program down to the end.

When at last Daniel was prompted to pray that great prayer of confession on behalf of himself and his people (Dan. 9:1-19), he was accorded this twofold response: (1) the assurance that he was "greatly beloved" (9:23); (2) the revelation of the Lord's purposes for his people—far beyond all asking—even their prophetic history determined to the end (9:24-27). Later, a three weeks' seeking of the face of the Lord (10:2, 3) received a like twofold response: (1) he was twice assured of being "greatly beloved" of the Lord (10:11, 19); (2) he was vouchsafed a vision of the Lord (10:5-21). He saw Him as the incarnate Son of God—the Son of Man in glory (cf. Dan. 10:5-8 with Rev. 1:12-18). Truly this is the highest reward of a Life of Prayer.

6 AND 7. CORNELIUS AND PETER. We come now to two New Testament characters, and their prayer experience is so intimately interwoven that we must necessarily study them together. They too exemplify the needfulness of a Life of Prayer if we are to take our place and play our part in the harmonious working out of the divine will.

The story is a beautiful one. Cornelius, a centurion, a Gentile proselyte to Judaism, is introduced to us as

> "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (Acts 10:2).

He "prayed to God alway," yet in ignorance. He knew not the name, the worth and saving power of His Son. So God sent a heavenly messenger to Cornelius, to say to him:

> "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: . . . he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do" (Acts 10:4-6).

Now, be it noted, this is not an answer to prayer, rather a response to a Life of Prayer. Cornelius is not said to have asked anything, but his consistent prayer-life commended him to God and put him in the way of receiving beyond all he asked or thought, even that which he was too ignorant to ask. The Lord said, "Here is My servant, Cornelius. He is a man of prayer. I cannot keep from him the good news of My grace, the Gospel of My Son." So He bids him send to Joppa.

But now for Peter's part in the story. Peter is wholly unprepared to be a messenger in this matter. He is a Jew at heart, bound by Jewish practice and prejudice. But—he is also a man of prayer. This gave God His opportunity. It is not what Peter accomplished in that hour of prayer; it is what the Lord accomplished. Prayer is a preparation for fuller revelation, an open door into the mind and will of our God.

See now how the two experiences dovetail. The narrative continues:

> "On the morrow, as they (Cornelius' messengers) went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour" (Acts 10:9).

The Lord used that prayer-hour to take out of Peter's heart all ceremonial distinction of clean and unclean, and

prepare him as a preacher of the Gospel to the Gentiles (see Acts 10:9-22). What would Peter have missed if he had not given himself to prayer, thereby giving God a chance at his prejudices? There follows one of the most wonderful experiences of Peter's life (see Acts 10:34-48).

It was wholly the result of prayer—prayer on the part of two men. But it was wholly apart from anything they asked. In the case of the one, he was too ignorant to ask it. In the case of the other, he was too prejudiced. In the one, it was a response beyond the asking; in the other, contrary to the asking or desiring. In each case it was God's response to a Life of Prayer. Such a life lays the mind and heart of man open to a fuller revealing of His perfect willing and planning for our living and serving.

Focusing these lessons upon ourselves, how intensely we should feel the need of a Life of Prayer. First of all, from God's side: that He may break down our narrow, limiting prejudices, be they racial or social, ecclesiastical or spiritual, and, with resulting freedom, carry out His own purposes in us. That is, prayer is not a grocery list that one takes to the store to have filled; not just the supplying of our conscious need. Our listing of needs falls far short of His comprehensive purposes for us.

So, again, from our side: we need a Life of Prayer to put us out into the stream of His will, to broaden and deepen our spiritual life-currents. Not to live a Life of Prayer is to leave unexplored a great area of the will of God. It is to daily miss unsuspected bestowments. It is to live on a plane of self-imposed spiritual impoverishment. A Life of Prayer puts us in the way of being enriched "exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think."

CHAPTER IV

HIS PEACE THROUGH A LIFE OF PRAYER

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee"—Isa. 26:3.

It remains for us to consider the Life of Prayer in its practical effect upon Christian character. In doing so we propose to particularize, singling out one quality as the index of an all-victorious life. That quality is peace. For the absence of peace is *prima facie* evidence that Christ is not enthroned. It is a life that cannot please Him. He has not come into His own.

We move in a world of worry and vexation of spirit. So much so that we may characterize worry as the index of a worldly life. It abounds on all sides. Ofttimes it pervades the atmosphere we breathe to the point of saturation. Can the Christian hope to escape it?

Thank God, there is a life that is immune, in the possession of God's own antidote. Of it we read:

> "Neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10).
>
> "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).
>
> "These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Jesus gives us peace. The world gives us worry. Which shall prevail? Our prayer-life, or the lack of it, will decide.

It is the overcoming life that is to be crowned. In the new order of things that is to be, Jesus is heard saying, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things" (Rev. 21:7). Overcomes what? Surely the thing that goes to make up our God-given or God-permitted test. And if "worry" is the answer we are prone to give to life's tests, may we not venture, for our present purposes, to insert that word as the crystallization of our test: "He that overcometh—worry—shall inherit all things."

Is there a life that supplants worry with peace? If so, who would not have it? Man's world, as we observe it, tells us such a life is desperately needful. God's Word, as we study it, tells us it is gloriously possible.

To deal with the problem comprehensively, from its roots to its fruits, at the same time bringing help and deliverance to those whom worry has victimized, we must raise, and undertake to answer, the following questions: Why do we worry? Why should we not worry? And then the practical question, How not to worry?

In treating the first two we will follow the threefold relationship, so often instanced in Scripture—our duty to ourselves, to our neighbor, to our God. These, like the three sides of a triangle, comprehend the whole of life. The third question will be answered by an appeal to Scripture, where alone such a life can be found.

I—Why We Worry

1. Worry Is a Personal Habit. It is a habit that, once formed, is difficult to overcome. For it is largely a mental habit, an attitude of mind toward what happens, may happen or may not happen. The habit of worrying wears grooves in our gray matter. Every time we indulge in it the grooves are made deeper, like ruts in a dirt road. With every recurrence we become the more apt to drop into them. We are victims of our own habit.

Moreover, the very earnestness of life superinduces the habit. Here, for instance, is a mother with three small children. She wants to be the best mother on God's earth. She bears those children hourly upon her mind and heart. Then she has three perfectly good reasons, insistent reasons, for worrying. One may break a limb before the day is over. Another may contract a contagious disease. Who knows what may happen to a child? Or here is a father: large family; small wages; no margin to fall back upon; uncertain health that may give way at any time. As he thinks of his family, why shouldn't he fall into the habit of worrying?

Once the habit is acquired, there is little relief. Every threatened fluctuation of circumstance is a signal for a fresh indulgence in it. Thus thousands are proving themselves incapable of an overcoming life, merely reflecting the fearsomeness or changefulness of their environment.

2. We Worry Because Others About Us Worry. It is contagious. It is in the atmosphere. It is passed from mouth to mouth. Our neighbors are worldly people. They know only the world's philosophy. When things go wrong, or threaten to, they freely express the world's spirit of fear and anxiety. We catch it from them. We fall into their ways of looking at things. We are bound to do so, unless —and that is where our prayer-life becomes a necessity. Only as a Life of Prayer makes Christ more real than our neighbors, makes His philosophy of life, His way of viewing things, more dominant than theirs—only so can we escape falling into their ways of worrying.

The world worries, and has ample reason for doing so. It faces tremendous problems, with no real solution for them. But the Christian is very differently situated. He is "not of the world." Prayer maintains an other-worldly viewpoint, and he is spared the mental contagion.

3. We Worry Because We Do Not Realize Our Heavenly Father's Care. This we conceive to be the chief and determining reason. The Fatherhood of our God has been left in the realm of theory. Faith has failed to clothe it with practical reality.

We must listen anew to our Saviour, pleading with us to be persuaded of our Father's loving care and therein to rest:

> "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt. 6:25, 26).

The "thought" Jesus disallows is not the provident thought that stocks the larder for the winter's need, but the anxious, worrying thought that saps the spiritual life. He is inveighing against worry over the simple necessities of life—food, drink and clothing. He instances the birds. They have all these, with no lack. Why? Because their Heavenly Father provides for them? No, indeed. They have no Heavenly Father; they are merely creatures. "Your Heavenly Father" feedeth them. That's the kind of a Father you have. See what He does for His creatures. What will He not do for His children? Are ye not much better than they?"

> "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do

> they spin: and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matt. 6:28-30.)

How the question of clothing vexes the human mind! Jesus bids us look to the lilies of the field, so beautifully clothed, for a demonstration of our Father's delight to adorn even the humblest of His creations. Solomon, with all his suit-makers and costly extravagance, "was not arrayed like one of these." If He does this for the grass of the field, so transitory, but for a day, surely we have every reason to trust Him. Jesus' plea for a worry-excluding reliance upon our Father is very emphatic (omitting the supplied words in the translation): "Not much more you, O ye of little faith?"

> "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. 6:31-34).

Is there any fallacy, any weakness, in the argument upon which Jesus rests His double "therefore"? There is none. The case is so perfectly conclusive. So He commands us: "Do not worry about these creature necessities; for after all these things do the Gentiles seek." Who are they? The unconverted people who have no Heavenly Father, who are just grown-ups, looking after themselves. But how different it is with you, the children of God. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that you have need of all these things."

What a comfort! What a care-free life! If Jesus wants us to live such a life, and shows us the reasonable basis for it, why should not every child of grace rejoice to live it? Note the thrice-repeated "all these things." The unconverted continually seek them; our Heavenly Father is ever mindful that we need them; as we seek first our Father's interest, He will delight to see that we, His children, have them.

Conclusion: The key to a care-free life is a day by day trust that leaves the unfolding future wholly and implicitly in our Father's hands.

Such words of counsel from the lips of the Lord, who unfailingly and unfalteringly trusted His Father, should lead us into prayerful consideration of our second question.

II—Why We Should Not Worry

With our Lord's plea for a care-free life resounding in the soul, we turn to the same three-angled consideration of the reasons why we should not worry.

1. It Is Most Harmful to Ourselves. It is impossible to instance a single benefit accruing from worrying. By its indulgence one's mental, spiritual and physical forces are depleted, leaving one the less capable of suitable action when action is needful.

We must recognize the existence of two well-defined sets of forces in the world. They are aligned with light, and its opposite, darkness; with life, and its opposite, death. The one is constructive; the other, destructive. Love, joy, peace, purity, contentment, kindliness, etc.—these are constructive; they build up; they make better those who indulge them and those who experience them. Hatred, jealousy, anger, bitterness, anxiety, restlessness of spirit, etc.—these are destructive; they tear down; they leave one the worse for their indulgence.

That worry is definitely and unalterably destructive in its working can be conclusively demonstrated by appeal to the purely physical. How much more in the sphere of the moral, mental and spiritual. Yea, the demonstration we propose is based upon an unwholesome mental state, and that in turn is made possible by a below-privilege spiritual state.

We propose to trace the effect of worry, fear, and the like, upon the digestive process, and through digestion, or its lack, upon our entire well-being. It is a simple laboratory experiment. Take, for example, a cat. By the introduction into the alimentary tract of Sub-Nitrate of Bismuth, or allied substance, darkening the walls of the canal, the progress of the food may be observed from beginning to end of the process.

Let the subject be in a peaceful, contented state, and the peristaltic movement goes on with splendid regularity, extracting nourishment from the food for the upbuilding of the body. But let it be suddenly and severely affrighted; we observe the peristaltic process coming to a complete stop. Or if it be a milder disturbance of feeling there is a proportionate slowing down.

Transfer the experiment to the human and the results are just the same. A peaceful, joyous, care-free state of mind and spirit is the best possible aid to digestion. But let a load of fear, fret or anxiety rest upon the mind, it immediately acts as a drag upon the digestive process. We become under-nourished. Our nervous system is impoverished and deranged. We call a physician. He does his best to cope with the condition our folly has created. Finally he advises a change of scenery, involving banishment from home and dear ones. Or possibly an operation becomes necessary.

All of this costs in money as well as in health. And it is all traceable to persistence in the habit of worrying. What an expensive luxury! The writer, when speaking upon this matter, has had people come to him and say something like this: "My husband would have been spared the expense of a hospital and operation bill if I had heard and heeded this a few years ago."

Or, perchance, while struggling along under this slow form of self-inflicted suicide, you are approached with the suggestion: "I think Christian Science would help you." Why, of course! For what happens? Immediately that you consult a practitioner of this mind-over-matter system, you are asked the question, "Are you worrying about anything?" You have to confess that you are. "Well, you must stop worrying." And you do. You put on an artificial smile (for your heart has not been changed), and you walk out into life, resolved not to worry again.

Now look at yourself. What you would not allow the Son of God, your Lord and Saviour, to do for you, through your persistent refusal to obey His commands, not acknowledging worry to be sin against Him as well as against your body, you have arrived at through giving heed to a woman with a false system, denying the atoning Blood whereby you were bought. Oh, shame! Shame!! Shame!!!

But there is a further arraignment of worry, of still more serious moment.

2. It Is Most Injurious to Our Neighbor. The particular injury we have in mind is on this wise: We have friends, people who know us, who are not Christians and possibly never will be apart from a vital, testimonial faith observable in our lives. Such a testimony to the super-abounding sufficiency of our Saviour is the supreme debt we owe in the Gospel.

This is what happens. We are smiling and exuberant when our sky is flooded with sunshine and matters are moving along well with us. But our observers are not strongly impressed. They reason somewhat as Satan did concerning Job. It is a paying proposition when piety and prosperity are inseparably linked together. Anyone ought to smile and act the part under those circumstances.

But now, let adversity come. You meet severe financial reverses; or the grim reaper snatches a dear one from your bosom; or ill-health dogs your steps. Your observer is all attention, alert to see how your Christian faith will stand the test. What does he see? He sees the corners of your mouth droop, the light fade from your eyes, the elasticity leave your step, the joy depart from your heart. He says "It's just as I thought. There's no reality in Christian faith These people go to pieces the same as the man in the world. They have nothing that I have not."

Just when you had opportunity to bear glowing testimony to a Saviour who sustains and satisfies under all circumstances, you failed Him. And in losing your testimony, you robbed your neighbor. He should have seen the overcoming life in fullest demonstration in you.

Dear reader, it is our conviction that there are literally thousands outside the Church of Christ today who should be inside and would have been had God's people borne a consistent testimony to His sustaining grace, living in such intimate fellowship with Him as would enable Him to keep them in perfect peace, whate'er betide. May we not each for himself, ask the solemn question: "Of those thousands how many are unsaved because I failed under test?"

But the superlative reason for not worrying is still before us.

3. It Hurts the Heart of Our Heavenly Father. Bearing in mind our Lord's teachings in Matthew 6, already considered, we can appreciate the hurt only as we place ourselves in His position of Fatherhood. For this purpose the writer may be pardoned for making personal reference to himself as a parent.

A few years ago our work as Bible-Evangelist took us away from home much of the time. The youngest in the home was a boy of eight or nine years. Let us suppose that, through the father's continued absence, he began to lose his childhood's rightful freedom from care concerning clothing, food, etc., things which lie wholly within the father's province to provide. (This is just what takes place in the life of the child of God when, through neglect of prayer and fellowship, the Heavenly Father becomes an absentee.) Upon returning, we find the tell-tale lines of care in his formerly joyous, chubby face. We ask what is troubling him. "Oh," says he, "my clothes are wearing out and I haven't the money to buy more. Then, too, I'm worried about my food. It may soon give out."

What is his real trouble? He has left his place, the place of a child. What is a father for? Assuredly to take care of his children. The boy has stepped into his father's province, robbing him of his fatherhood prerogative. And, mind you, what is a small matter to the father's purse seems mountain high to the boy, bending him low beneath its burden.

We take him aside and reason with him: "Son, did we ever refuse to take you to the clothiers and buy you a suit when needed? Have we ever failed as a father to supply you with ample food? Do you doubt our willingness to do so still? Will you not leave these things to your father's love and care?"

But now, suppose that, in spite of all our pleading, we are unable to dissuade him from his obsession that he must take the concern for these things upon himself, unwilling to trust his father's loving care and power to provide. Suppose the worry continues to cloud his childish face and burden his boyish spirit. Do you see how it would hurt the father's heart? Like thrusting him through with a dagger! To think that his boy would not trust him to function as a father!

That dagger, dear reader, you have heedlessly thrust through your Heavenly Father's heart each time you indulged in worry, telling Him you were unwilling to take your place as His child or trust Him to fulfill His part as your Father.

Let us pause here long enough to ask His forgiveness; to confess that it will always be so as long as we neglect to live a vital, trust-begetting Life of Prayer; and in the strength of a new resolve, to solemnly promise Him: "By Thy grace, never again."

III—How Not to Worry

If there is a life that does not worry, that feels itself free from all necessity of worrying, surely every one should rejoice to find it and delight to live it. Why not? There is not a single argument for its usefulness or rightfulness. Every consideration we have examined, in its effect upon ourselves, upon others, upon our God, argues for consigning worry and its vexatious family to the discard, definitely, once and forever.

But now comes the practical question. Is such a life possible? If it is, evidently it is not only our privilege; it is clearly our duty. Then how shall we find it?

We can never hope to come into a care-free life by looking to our circumstances. They are vacillating, unstable and uncertain. We know not what a day may bring forth. Consequently the centering of one's life in circumstances, the sense of being subject to them, the inability to rise above them—this is the fruitful cause and occasion for a life of anxiety and worry.

Our sole escape is in God, in bringing Him consciously into the center of life's living. This means a Life of Prayer. Or, shall we say, a life of trust that through prayer feeds upon, and confidently appropriates, the promises of His Word. To daily pursue this course is to experience day by day, moment by moment, a life of victory. Where God and His Word are enthroned, worry cannot crowd in. We have adopted the one means for effectively displacing it. We have supplanted it with His presence and peace.

All Scripture, studied in simple faith, assimilated into our spiritual being, and turned back to God in trusting

prayer, is well calculated to produce peace in the soul. But the Holy Spirit, knowing sin's aftermath to be a native weakness for worrying, anticipated our proneness by adapting certain promises specifically to this need. The examination of a few of them will serve to stimulate the student to search the Scriptures for further warrant for a life free from worry, while a consistent prayer-life will transmute the revealed possibility into realized reality.

1. "THE PEACE OF GOD"—PHIL. 4:6, 7.

> "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Analyzed, these words present a three-fold condition, in the nature of a command, the heeding of which is followed by the assured promise of the peace of God, as an actual yet supernatural experience, possessing mind and heart.

"In nothing be anxious." Here let us pause to challenge the reader to find a single scripture that warrants worry on the part of a child of God. Just one! Do you not see that, if you could find it, the Bible would be chargeable with contradicting itself. Here is the command not to do so.

"In nothing be anxious." Nothing is made up of no-thing. It is impossible to put anything into no-thing. Nothing is a circle with everything excluded. Your child's sickness; your boy's waywardness; your neighbor's meanness—all are excluded. They are but tests of your willingness to obey God rather than the promptings of human nature.

There is a reason. Worry is incompatible with a Life of Prayer. It prevents us from praying and God from working. Do not worry, "but—." Adopt the prayer method instead. "In everything by prayer and supplication." Now we understand God's ways with us. Everything is excluded from care that it might be included in prayer. He, our Father, wants the opportunity of caring for the things that concern us.

This is to be mingled "with thanksgiving." Remembrance of past mercies is the key to unlock further benefits.

When these three are faithfully followed as the prescribed ingredients of a life of trust, the promised result is bound

to be our experience. His peace, which Jesus proved and passed down to us as our rightful inheritance, saying, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you"—His peace shall garrison our minds and hearts, and that in a manner beyond comprehension in view of our circumstances. God is taking a hand. We have refused worry. Now His peace is there peremptorily to challenge its every approach. It cannot set foot on ground that He is occupying, the sacred citadel of a surrendered, trustful heart.

We believe there is practical "medicinal value" in this prescription. Here is one instance. Not long since a young business woman requested us to call upon her as a spiritual physician. She had gone to pieces physically. She was in mental distress and spiritual darkness. She appealed for help. We were not free to go but we prescribed by mail. Among other scriptures we stressed Philippians 4:6, 7 as a threefold prescription, urging her to take it as often as symptoms indicated. What of the result? She speedily recovered. Not only was she able to retain her position; today she is well in body, mind and spirit.

Reader, will you as definitely make proof of God? He is saying, "Prove Me now herewith," and is waiting to pour His peace into your erstwhile troubled heart.

2. "All Your Care Upon Him"—1 Pet. 5:7.

"Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you."

The emphasis is upon the "all." Some, however large the part, will never do. It is the principle He is concerned with. Worry or trust, care or prayer—which? There is no middle ground. So, to test us, He sends a wee little care. If we worry about it we will feel ourselves free to worry about any and all others. We have not come into the place of pleasing Him. So He says, "My child, until you can trust Me will *all* your care, you may keep it all." We have robbed ourselves and Him.

Dear reader, can He not persuade you that "He is caring for you," and that His so marvelous, supernatural care is all-sufficient under all circumstances?

"O Lord! how happy should we be,
If we could cast our care on Thee,
If we from self could rest;
And feel, at heart, that One above,
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,
Is working for the best!"

Surely we see that a constant and consistent Life of Prayer is the only portal through which we shall enter into the privileged freedom from care here enjoined.

3. "LOOKING UNTO JESUS"—HEB. 12:2.

> "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

These words become exceedingly significant and peace-imparting when we catch the complete thought conveyed by the original language. The participle "looking" has a prefix which the translators thought too awkward to insert. What it says is this: "Looking *away* unto Jesus."

The meaning is evident. To run the race successfully, to be counted an overcomer and obtain the victor's crown, our eyes must not be suffered to rest upon objects nearby, which serve to disturb and distract. What a secret for Christian living. Is there anything that tempts to anxiety, that threatens to rob us of our spiritual poise and peace? The instructions are: Refuse to keep looking at it, brooding over it, pondering it, mulling it over in your mind until you have cudgelled your brains with it. Look away from it. Look away to Jesus, who is never disturbed, in whom is no suggestion of worry, who Himself faced every test, even the severest, that of the Cross, and was crowned as our Overcomer.

There is Christian psychology at the basis of this. If we allow ourselves continually to dwell upon troubles, either threatened or actual, it is utterly impossible to maintain a peaceful state of mind and heart. We live under psychological laws that preclude it. So doing, our troubles bore a hole into our gray matter; they burn themselves into our consciousness. Any one can convince himself of this in a very simple, every-day manner. Take the following personal experience. On a certain afternoon, while in the State of Washington, we drove to the woods to gather wild blackberries. Several hours passed pleasantly in the task. Upon returning home we found it necessary to spend the evening sorting and preserving them. When we retired and closed our eyes we still saw blackberries. We had looked at them so continuously, they had registered upon the retina of the mind. They refused to withdraw, and were real to us even

though absent. So will it inevitably be, dear reader, with your much brooded-over, troublesome circumstances.

But when we play the part of a Christian, the same law works for us. When we fill our eye with Jesus, in whom is peace and strength, when through a Life of Prayer He has the preeminence and takes precedence over things outward and pressing, we have fixed Him upon the retina of the soul. Then how amazing to discover that "things" are shorn of their power to disturb.

"Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace."

4. "KEEP HIM IN PERFECT PEACE"—ISA. 26:3.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee."

Here again the original is richer than our rendering. "Perfect peace" is the translation of a Hebraism, literally, "peace, peace." It means: Thou wilt keep him in a continuous, uninterrupted experience of peace. Peace today, peace tomorrow, peace the next day. Peace, peace, peace, (add as many as you wish). It is the unbroken flow of the river's current:

"O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river" (Isa. 48:18).

To whom is this experience promised? To him whose circumstances are just right? Never fluctuating? Never troublesome? Never disappointing? Oh, no! Quite the contrary. To "him whose mind is stayed on Thee," the more because his circumstances threaten to break through upon his peace. It is the same lesson as we were seeing in Hebrews. The secret of life is inward, not outward. If only we will turn our mind trustingly to Him, He can thereby control our inner estate, and the outer will be shorn of power to trouble us. It is psychology, plus Christ.

Hence the appealing exhortation, that should beget in every child of God, for his own satisfaction and that of his Heavenly Father, an earnest, ceaseless life of trustful, mind-stayed-upon-Him prayer:

"Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength" (Isa. 26:4).

5. The "Fret Not" Sermonette—Ps. 37:1-8.

> "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil (R. V.—Fret not thyself, it tendeth only to evil-doing)."

This Psalm encourages the righteous to live a peaceful life, in calm and quiet confidence, though surrounded by the wicked and harrassed by their evil deeds. The outcome is certain and assured (vv. 9-40). In view of this we are bidden to live victoriously, whatever the present, permitted testings, in restful, rejoicing reliance in the Lord our God (vv. 1-8).

These verses, quoted above, constitute a brief, beautiful, yet effective sermonette on the subject of worrying. The text is the two words, "Fret not." It points out the steps leading to a life that does not worry. These successive steps are found in the emphasized verbs of command and exhortation.

"Fret Not" (1). This is one of the clear commands of Scripture, wholly in harmony with the spirit and purpose of God's Word throughout. Presuming that all our readers accept the Bible as their "rule of faith and practice," with whom to see its teaching is forthwith to gladly submit thereto, let us propose a Christian's questionnaire:

"Do you steal?"
"Do you lie?"
"Do you swear?"
"Do you get drunk?"

Instantly and indignantly you reply, "Why, of course I do not. I am a Christian, ordering my life by God's Word. I would not do any of these things."

Then, encouraged by your ready reply, we add the further question.

"Do you worry?"

Why do you hesitate, and perhaps falteringly answer, "Well, I'll have to think about that"? Why make a distinction, where God's Word makes none?

Unequivocally you condemn a man for falling into the former sins. Why do you not condemn yourself for the latter? Is it at all conceivable that drunkenness on the part of a fleshly, unregenerate man is as great a sin in the sight of God as is worrying on the part of His Spirit-born, Spirit-indwelt child? Assuredly not.

"TRUST in the Lord and do good" (3). You have no time to worry with a Christian's call to service sounding in your ears. Moreover, the two are mutually exclusive. You cannot "worry" and "trust" at the same time. Such spiritual acrobatics are as impossible as for a man to stand on his feet and sit restfully in a chair at one and the same time. The two acts are mutually exclusive. So are fretting ourselves and trusting the Lord. When we are fretting, we are not trusting. When we are trusting, we are not fretting. And worrying, being an indulgence of the flesh, wars against and suppresses the spiritual attitude of trusting.

"DELIGHT thyself also in the Lord" (4). Do not remain on the dead level of duty, merely endeavoring to avoid worry because it is wrong. Here is an antidote for it—a delightful one at that. Set your mind and heart upon the Lord, to delight in Him and His dealings with you. Two things will follow: Not only will you feel no provocation to worry, but you will enable the Lord to "give thee the desires of thine heart." This is a glorious step in advance. We are well on the road to Heart-Ease. We have taken higher ground.

"COMMIT thy way unto the Lord," etc. (5, 6). As the former command cares for our inner estate, so this command fully covers our outer estate. Whatever the circum-

stance, as we commit it to Him, and trust Him, He accepts our case and sets to work. "He shall bring it to pass."

How wonderful! How reassuring! The particular promise is for days when we are misjudged and our good name is at stake. Such days drive us to our knees, to a trustful Life of Prayer. When scandal and abuse are abroad, and our reputation is assailed, this is preeminently the place in God's Word to which we should turn. Put the finger of faith upon Psalm 37:5, 6 and live in it. The inner calm of quiet committal will be followed by a gracious outer stilling of the storm.

"REST in the Lord, and WAIT patiently for Him" (7a). Let us see how reasonable, and wholly possible, this exhortation is at this point. For our inner need we have learned to delight ourselves in the Lord—now we can rest in Him. For our outer need, we have definitely committed our way to Him and He is working—we can patiently wait for Him and His time of full deliverance.

"FRET NOT—FRET NOT" (7b, 8b). We have reached the end of our sermonette. It concludes with a double reiteration of the text—"Fret not." Step by step it has led us into the life that does not worry, the life that feels itself free from the proneness to worry. It is the life of peace and rest; from it we have no desire to descend to our former low, miasmic level.

Having highly resolved, trusting in Him for strength, henceforth, as a matter of Christian principle and privilege, to so abide in Him as to leave no room in our lives for sinful, Christ-dishonoring worry, He meets us in this resolve and pours His own heaven-sent peace into mind and heart. In this abiding answer to our trust, we are "kept."

Three practical considerations and the story is told:

First. A Life of Prayer, the consistent and constant laying hold of God through His Word, rather than a spasmodic,

haphazard effort to meet the exigencies of our case as some special need arises, is the only way whereby we can let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, even that experience of peace to which we are called (Col. 3:15).

Second. To stop short of attaining this peace is to threaten our whole prayer-life with failure. Worry sends off deadly gases destructive to faith. Prayer cannot mount on wings of faith when the clouds of fretful doubt obscure the Father's face. To be victorious in our prayer-life we must leave behind the Plains of Worry and press on to the Citadel of Peace.

Third. This done, peace is by no means the only resultant in the life. Peace never comes to us alone; she has sister-graces. The gains are many. In excluding worry, we have pleased the Lord and opened our hearts to His unhindered operation. A Spirit-filled life is unfolding to us. What will He not work in us? Not alone peace, for "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:22, 23, R.V.).

A Life of Prayer is the loosing of the power of God in the soul that is exercised thereby. Its possibilities are limitless: "For it is God who is working in you, both to will and to work his good-pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). It means a life more and more approaching, even here, the likeness to which we are destined over there. May our God create in us such cravings for peace, for power to overcome, for holy, victorious living, as shall clothe prayer with a new constraint of daily necessity.

The Holy Life

There is a faith unmixed with doubt,
  A love all free from fear;
A walk with Jesus, where is felt
  His presence always near.
There is a rest that God bestows,
  Transcending pardon's peace,
A lowly, sweet simplicity,
  Where inward conflicts cease.

There is a service God-inspired,
  A zeal that tireless grows,
Where self is crucified with Christ,
  And joy unceasing flows.
There is a being "right with God,"
  That yields to His command
Unswerving, true fidelity,
  A loyalty that stands.

There is a meekness free from pride,
  That feels no anger rise
At slights, or hate, or ridicule,
  But counts the cross a prize.
There is a patience that endures
  Without a fret or care,
But joyful sings, "His will be done,
  My Lord's sweet grace I share."

There is a purity of heart,
  A cleanness of desire,
Wrought by the Holy Comforter
  With sanctifying fire.
There is a glory that awaits
  Each blood-washed soul on high,
When Christ returns to take His bride
  With Him beyond the sky.

Anon.

CHAPTER V

PRACTICAL HINTS FOR A LIFE OF PRAYER

SEVEN CONDITIONS—SEVEN SUGGESTIONS.

That this treatise on prayer may prove itself as valuable as possible to the reader we must now pass to some of the practical considerations involved. What we have in mind is the question every earnest pray-er should put to himself: How to succeed in a Life of Prayer. The answer is in two parts: First, conditions of success in prayer, derived from God's Word; second, suggestions for success in prayer, drawn from experience.

I—Seven Conditions

Our Heavenly Father having made provision, as we have seen, for a Life of Prayer, His Word must contain the necessary directions. Scanning the teachings of Scripture, we find that the "irreducible minimum" of successful prayer consists of seven directions so essential that we may term them "conditions." They are the fundamentals of prayer. What "contact" is to the transmission of electricity, these conditions are to prayer's answer.

1. In Faith, Believing.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

"But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting: for he that doubteth is like the surge of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; a doubleminded man, unstable in all his ways" (Jas. 1:6-8, R. V.).

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark. 11:24).

In this last Scripture the meaning is: "Believe that you have in God's granting of them, and you shall have in the actual experience of them." In other words, faith is a precedent of experience. Yet it is to be feared that people look upon prayer as an inexpensive experiment, a cheap way of getting things. It costs nothing; if it works, well and good. They remind us of the woman who ventured, on the strength of Jesus' words, to pray for the removal of the

mountain in the rear of her home. The next morning, upon looking out and seeing the mountain unmoved, she said, "I knew all the time that it would be there." She disregarded Jesus' expressed condition: "Shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith" (Mark 11:23). Hers was a mere venture, tempting God. The faith "contact" that lays hold of God's power was lacking.

"But," some one says, "I haven't faith." Very well. Set about to have it. "Ye have not, because ye ask not." Faith "is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Saturate your mind, meanwhile, with God's Word as the means whereby faith "comes" (Rom. 10:17).

2. A Life Inwardly Right.

This involves a clean heart and a loving, forgiving spirit.

> "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Ps. 66:18).
>
> "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses" (Mark. 11:25, 26).

Our Lord cannot fellowship evil. To harbor known sin in the heart, to withdraw ourselves from the constant cleansing of His ever-availing blood—under these conditions we can no more secure His blessings through prayer than one can draw water through a pipe clogged with mud or choked with rubbish.

An unworthy, unforgiving, un-Christian attitude toward our fellows is a sure barrier to effective prayer.

> "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31, 32).

We were freely forgiven and His love was poured into our hearts that we, in turn, might pass His love and His forgiveness on to others. This He expects us to do. If we cannot find it in our hearts so to do, whatever the circumstance, we grieve him, we prove ourselves unworthy of Him, we choke the channels, our prayer-life is at a standstill. Prayer requires that our hearts be kept in an up-to-the-

minute state of cleansing. We should crave His searching inspection at all times:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23, 24).

3. A Life Outwardly Upright.

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isa. 59:2).

"If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

"The prayer of the upright is His delight. No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Prov. 15:8; Ps. 84:11).

"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (Jas. 5:16, R. V.).

"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:20-22).

Negatively stated, sin, wherever found, is an offense to a holy and righteous God. It dishonors His covenant of Grace. It does despite to His Holy Spirit. Hence, a sinful life cannot approach God in prayer with any assurance of being heard. He cannot be a party to our sin. The first step is to confess, and claim His faithfulness to forgive and cleanse—1 John 1:9.

Positively, the life that can pray is the openly righteous, upright life. His is a faith emboldened by an uncondemning heart. "He shall receive the blessing from the Lord" (Ps. 24:5). Prayer's unlimited promise, "whatsoever," is unlocked by the "because" of an obedient life, one that seeks to please Him above all else. Moreover, the "commandment" of this prayer-condition is a purely Christian one—faith toward Christ and love toward our fellows.

4. In and Through the Holy Spirit.

"For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18, R. V.).

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20).

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18).

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26).

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord" (Zech. 4:6) is the key to prayer achievements. As the telephone is dead and impotent without the electric current, so is prayer apart from the Spirit. He supplies the sending power; He secures the access; He forms the contact; He moulds the pray-er into the mind and will of God. The Spirit is at once the guide of prayer and the guarantor of its success.

5. In the Name of Jesus Christ Our Lord.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13, 14).

"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

The condition is clear-cut; the promise is abundant and explicit. But what does this involve? Surely infinitely more than the mere muttering of the name to conclude our prayer. Acknowledging His claims as to His person and work; resting in His all-authority; relying upon His past sacrifice and present position of power; taking our place in that complete identification with Him which gives us the right to His name; asking as for Him, not for ourselves—this is the rich, rewarding content of the condition He has laid down for us.

6. In Accordance with the Will of the Father.

"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John 5:14, 15).

Here is a condition calculated to spur us on mightily. "If we ask anything," meeting this one condition, "we know that we have," etc. First, it precludes presumption—the presumption of dictating to God in matters of circumstance such as sickness and suffering, position and prospering. Prayer must rest in our loving Heavenly Father's wisdom in "all these things"—He knows best. In this we have our Saviour's example: "Not My will, but Thine be done."

Second, it constrains to a more utter, day after day, yielding of ourselves to Him, to seek, know, and enter into His perfect mind and will.

7. A Life that Abides in Him.

> "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).

In a very real sense this is the master-key that unlocks all prayer-treasure, the master-condition that covers all other conditions. To abide in Him and have His words abide in us—this is the key to the prayer of faith, to a clean heart, to an upright, obedient life. So abiding, we will have the Spirit's vitalizing power; we will be led into the Father's will; we will be bold to use His name, and that aright.

Here we meet the intimate connection between the Word and prayer. It is an integral part of the condition. To be led into all the mind and will and righteousness of His Word is to have all the resources of prayer unlocked to us.

Moreover, the Abiding Life is the supreme, comprehensive, climactic condition, since it calls for that which is continuous, uninterrupted, "abiding." The Life of Prayer is the flower and fruit of the Abiding Life.

II—Seven Suggestions

The conditions above are in the nature of Scriptural requirements, the *sine qua non* of success in prayer. To these we add the following suggestions, which should commend themselves to the earnest seeker after progress in prayer for their practical helpfulness.

1. Take Time.

To have caught the vision of the possibilities of prayer-achievement is to know that henceforth time must be given up to it. But there are many enemies to this. Satan will see to it that we are otherwise occupied. There must be high and firm resolution on our part. Hasty, hurried prayer is ruinous and fruitless.

Set apart a season that is sacred to the Lord and to the work of prayer. David maintained at least three such daily seasons:

> "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice" (Ps. 55:17).

Daniel had the same habit, continuing it at the peril of his life (Dan. 6:10). And these were busy men of affairs.

Did they lose time or save it, judged by their abiding influence?

Robert Murray McCheyne, the sainted young Scotch divine, was so impressed with the need of a deepened prayer-life that he embodied his resolves and convictions in the following declaration of purpose:

> "I am persuaded that I ought never to do anything without prayer, and, if possible, special secret prayer. . .I ought to pray far more for our church, for our leading ministers by name, and for my own clear guidance in the right way, that I may not be led aside, or driven aside from following Christ. . .I should pray much more in peaceful days, that I may be guided rightly when days of trial come. I ought to spend the best hours of the day in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into any corner. The morning hours from six to eight are the most uninterrupted, and should be thus employed, if I can prevent drowsiness. A little time after breakfast might be given to intercession. After tea is my best hour, and that should be solemnly dedicated to God, if possible."

2. Be Definite.

If you have no definite purpose in prayer, you can expect no definite results from it. Be sure you know what you want before you pray and that God knows what you want when you are through.

This requires: (1) Searching of heart, to see that our prayers are not a mere saying over of meaningless phrases but that they are the expression of real desire. (2) Preparation beforehand, to determine how we shall spend our time with Him. (How much previous thought would you give to a privileged ten minutes' audience with the President?) Lacking this preparation, we should quietly "wait upon Him" that He may order our thoughts, lest we find ourselves talking at random in the presence of the King. (3) A Prayer List. Our minds and hearts are so limited, so much so that the petition which grips them today fades from us tomorrow. Such an experience shames us. To be consistently definite we must have a record of that which we have undertaken to ask of the Lord.

3. Be Persevering.

We cannot dictate times and seasons to God. These He must ever keep within His own wisdom and power. Moreover, it is a part of His purpose to prove us by testing the tenacity of our faith. If we seek something in prayer, only

to cease making request after a week, a month, or a year has passed, we have given conclusive proof that we were making trial of God, that we had no deep-seated sense of need, that we could content ourselves without the answer. Prayer must prove itself genuine by persevering.

This means that faith will not, on the one hand, be impatient because the answer is not immediately forthcoming; nor yet will it be dissuaded by delay that seems tantamount to denial. Feeding upon His faithfulness it will pray on, as partner with the unwearied Christ.

> "More than half a century ago George Mueller, that prince of intercessors with God, began to pray for a group of five personal friends. After five years one of them came to Christ. In ten years two more of them found peace in the same Saviour. He prayed on, for twenty-five years, and the fourth man was saved. For the fifth he prayed until the time of his death, and this friend came too, came to Christ a few months afterwards. For the latter friend Mr. Mueller had prayed almost fifty-two years" (James H. McConkey).

Delay may be designed of God to prompt to self-examination, leading to the discovery of the difficulty in the personal life of the pray-er. Then faith, the barrier removed, rises to its task with renewed confidence. And, perchance, it fortifies itself with a prayer-helper, claiming the gracious promise given to united prayer:

> "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 18:19).

4. Be Scriptural.

True prayer puts its finger upon some promise of God and pleads His faithfulness to His own Word. It is one thing for a child to ask the parent for something of its own requesting; it is quite another to simply remind the parent of his own, previously made promise. Prayer after the pattern of the latter, is merely turning His believed Word back to Him in simple child-like plea and confidence. George Mueller, the man of prayer, puts it thus:

> "The man and the woman who are able thus to receive the Word of God—thus to rest on it, these are the strongest in faith. And that is just what we have to aim at continually—that we are satisfied with the Word of God, that we receive the Word of God, and that we say to ourselves: 'It will be so simply because God has said it.'"

Here emerges the intimate, practical relationship between Bible study and prayer. The one rests upon, grows out of, derives its inspiration from, the other. The heart surcharged with God's Word—that is the heart that can pray. A very dear friend, who walked with the Lord and with whom we had many precious seasons of prayer-fellowship, used always to draw forth his Testament and say, "Let us have a portion of the Word first." One of us would read; then followed the confident pleadings with Him who is "Faithful," who "cannot deny Himself."

Moreover, the Lord many times gives us wisdom and guidance when sought through His Word, shedding some special light upon its pages that renders it peculiarly applicable to our hearts or circumstances at the time, as clearly and explicitly as when we go to Him in the act of prayer. We pray best when we have searched His Word most.

5. KEEP THE HEART SINGING.

A singing heart! The reservoir of God's love, and joy, and peace, pouring forth a spontaneous stream of praise. Such a heart, the wise man says, is "like medicine." It tones up the entire spiritual life. It changes our whole outlook upon life. It enables us to "rejoice in the Lord always." It wards off the temptation to discouragement, knowing no defeat. It gives wings to our prayer-life.

Thus the singing heart is kept in unbroken communion with its Lord, and He becomes the fountain of its unfailing joy. Each feeds the other in an endless cycle of spiritual satisfaction.

Such a heart cannot be kept to itself. It blesses others with its overflow. The spontaneous song, rising unbidden to the lips, the unconscious welling up of the heart, how contagious it is. Did you ever try it? Of a morning, let the husband and father, while busy dressing for the day, break forth in some simple song of praise. Unconsciously the wife and mother gives it back from another part of the house. Her heart has been set a-singing. The children, soon off for school, with the same spontaneity take up the refrain. The Lord has gotten hold of an entire household, and lives have gone out to live victoriously for Him, all because of the joyous overflow of one heart's fellowship with Him.

And not only the voice; the face as well speaks forth the blessing of the joyous heart behind it. "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance." Its presence within, like that of our Lord Himself, cannot be hid. It was so in the life of Adoniram Judson, the great missionary to Burma. The story is told of a boy, playing at the railroad station of a certain town in Connecticut, that he became fascinated by the countenance of a man waiting to take the train. The stranger seemed to him to have the most wonderful face he had ever seen. Then the boy learned that the man with the shining face was none other than the man who had wrought so wondrously on the mission field. Years afterward that boy wrote a book, devoting a chapter to "What a Boy Saw in the Face of Adoniram Judson." It was the Psalmist who, centuries before, told us the secret: "They looked unto Him, and were radiant" (Ps. 34:5, R.V.). The secret is open to all.

6. KEEP THE WILL YIELDED.

Nothing is clearer than that we should never, if we would succeed spiritually, resist or rebel against the will of God. To be in truth the followers of our Lord, we must say with Him, not once or on occasion but as the attitude of life, "Not my will, but Thine, be done."

Nor is a mere passive submission to the divine will, as to something inscrutable and hard to bear, sufficient. It may be that at times, but it should be infinitely more, even an active yearning for the will of God at all times. Mark puts the Saviour's prayer thus: "Not what I will, but what Thou wilt." His will the supreme consideration! An alert eagerness should possess us to know it and see it performed. No prayer so becomes the Christian as that which invites, yea implores, Him to have His way with us:

Have Thine own way, Lord!
Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter;
I am the clay.
Mould me and make me
After Thy will,
While I am waiting,
Yielded and still.

—Adelaide Pollard.

7. KEEP THE LIFE CHRIST-CENTERED.

Worldly aims and ambitions will soon atrophy the prayer-life. Its motor nerve will soon shrivel and cease to function. It must be fed by a spiritual life-purpose. As Paul puts his own determination: "Wherefore we make it our ambition to be well-pleasing to Him" (2 Cor. 5:9, R.V.). Then Christ comes to the center; the whole of life radiates out from Him; the life-prayer becomes: "that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).

The holding of any lower ideal of life must bring us, sooner or later, to the realization that we have spent ourselves in ways not worth the while, that what we have wrought will not stand the searching test of finality.

While Helen Hunt Jackson lay upon her sick bed, she wrote a poem of penitent regret and petition for opportunity to retrieve the past with purposeful service. It came too late, for in four days after she had written these lines, she was dead. While the shuttle of time runs swiftly back and forth for us, let us busy ourselves weaving a life-fabric whose warp and woof are Love and Service for Him "who loved us and gave Himself for us." There is no time to waste in prayerless idleness or aimlessness.

The Brevity of Our Opportunity

Father, I scarcely dare to pray,
So clear I see, now it is done,
That I have wasted half my day,
And left my work but just begun.

So clear I see that things I thought
Were right or harmless were a sin;
So clear I see that I have sought,
Unconscious, selfish aims to win.

So clear I see that I have hurt
The souls I might have help'd to save,
That I have slothful been, inert,
Deaf to the calls Thy leaders gave.

In outskirts of Thy Kingdom vast,
Father, the humblest spot give me;
Set me the lowliest task Thou hast,
Let me repentant, work for Thee.

H. H. J.

CHAPTER VI

PRACTICAL RESULTS FROM A LIFE OF PRAYER

"He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him"—Ps. 91:15.

God hears and answers prayer. He is able to do, and does, "exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think." As we meet the rightful, revealed conditions of a Life of Prayer we may have the experience of His personal response. Nothing is more satisfying or stimulating to our spiritual life.

God's saints in all ages have had such experiences. For the most part they have gone unheralded, yet those that are of record would require volumes to recount. As a spur to our prayer-life, as well as a tribute to our Faithful God, we give the few that follow, necessarily limited by considerations of space.

Note that we group them in conformity to the classification given at the close of Chapter II, pages 33-35. The reader will do well to turn back to these for the Scriptures covering the various circumstances of need.

I—In Trouble—Needing Deliverance

THE LOST RECEIPT FOUND. A poor woman, living in a small cottage, had paid a large sum of money to a tradesman. He was dishonest and pressed her a second time for the money. The poor woman was certain she had paid the money, but she could not find the receipt anywhere, and the tradesman said, "Unless you find that receipt you will have to pay it; I shall send the bailiff, and will sell you out." What did the poor woman do? She went straight to God and said, "O, my Heavenly Father, Thou knowest the distress I am in, that it will ruin me if my little cottage and place are sold; O, my Heavenly Father, undertake for me, for I know I paid that man. My Father, have mercy on me, and find this bill for me."

As she rose from her knees, the sun shone out gloriously, and in flew a butterfly through the cottage door, and after it came quite a little child. The child caught at the butterfly, but it flew behind a cupboard. Then the child screamed.

trying in vain to get at it. The poor woman sought to quiet the child, but in vain; and a neighbor coming in said, "Oh, Mrs. ———, what is the matter with the child?" "Well," she replied, "a butterfly flew in, and the child wants to get it; it is behind that heavy cupboard, which I cannot move." "Oh," said the woman, "let us move the cupboard." As they did so a bit of paper fluttered down to the floor. When the old lady took it up, she beheld the receipted bill.

—Our Faithful God.

Crops Saved. A grasshopper plague visited Minnesota in the days of Gov. "Honest John" Pillsbury. A similar plague the preceding year had devastated all the crops. Its repetition would spell ruin to thousands throughout the State. Dr. R. A. Torrey tells how it was averted: "A number of influential men from various States met in consultation as to the best means of ridding them of the plague. The Governor of a neighboring State urged that the only thing to be done to escape the threatening plague was to appoint a day of prayer wherein all praying people should unite in praying God to remove the grasshoppers. John S. Pillsbury accepted the suggestion, returned home to St. Paul, and issued a proclamation that all people who believed in a God that answered prayer should proceed on a given day to their places of worship and pray God to remove the grasshoppers from Minnesota. On the appointed day a wonderful thing occurred. In some places the grasshoppers died by millions in the trenches; those that were able to fly rose up and flew out of the State of Minnesota. A few lingered on, but they, too, eventually disappeared, and the crops were saved. There has never been a grasshopper plague in Minnesota from that day to this, though there have been plagues in other States."

The Fog Lifted. Charles Inglis, while making the voyage to America a number of years ago, learned from the devout and godly Captain an experience which he had had but recently with George Mueller of Bristol. It seems they had encountered a very dense fog. Because of it the Captain had remained on the bridge continuously for twenty-four hours, when Mr. Mueller came to him and said, "Captain, I have come to tell you that I must be in Quebec on Saturday afternoon." When informed that it was impossible, he replied, "Very well, if your ship cannot take me, God will

find some other way—I have never broken an engagement for fifty-seven years—let us go down into the Chart Room, and pray."

The Captain continues the story thus: "I looked at that man of God, and thought to myself, What lunatic asylum can that man have come from—I never heard of such a thing as this. 'Mr. Mueller,' I said, 'do you know how dense this fog is?' 'No,' he replied, 'my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living God, who controls every circumstance of my life.' He knelt down, and he prayed one of the most simple prayers, and when he had finished, I was going to pray, but he put his hand on my shoulder, and told me not to pray. 'Firstly,' he said, 'because you do not believe God will, and secondly, because I believe God has, and there is no need whatever for you to pray about it.' I looked at him, and George Mueller said, 'Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years, and there has never been a single day that I have failed to get an audience with the King—get up, and open the door, and you will find the fog is gone.' I got up, and the fog was indeed gone. On Saturday afternoon George Mueller was in Quebec for his engagement."

Saved From Cannibals. Hudson Taylor made his first trip to China on a sailing vessel. When off the shore of a cannibal island, the wind failed and they were drifting helplessly toward the dangerous shoals. The natives, naked, were gathering by the hundreds on the shore, greatly excited by the prospect of the wreck. Hudson Taylor writes in his report:

"After standing together on the deck for some time in silence, the Captain said to me, 'Well, we have done everything that can be done; we can only await the result.' A thought occurred to me, and I replied, 'No, there is one thing we have not done yet.' 'What is it?' he queried. I answered, 'Four of us on board are Christians, let us each retire to his own cabin, and in agreed prayer ask the Lord to give us immediately a breeze. He can as easily send it now as at sunset.'

"The Captain, an earnest Christian, complied with this proposal. I went and spoke to the other two men, and after prayer with the carpenter we all four retired to wait upon

God. I had a good but brief season in prayer, and then felt so satisfied that our request was granted that I could not continue asking, and very soon went up on deck again." Immediately after he got there he felt a puff of wind. Mr. Taylor took it upon himself to ask that the mainsail be let down, though an unbelieving sailor mocked at it.

"This an officer was not slow to do. In another minute the heavy tread of the men on deck brought up the captain from his cabin to see what was the matter, and he saw that the breeze indeed had come. In a few minutes we were ploughing our way at six or seven knots an hour through the water, and the multitude of naked savages on the beach had no wreckage that night. We were soon out of danger."

II—In Sickness—Needing Restoration to Health

"Not One Chance in a Thousand." In May, 1914, my wife returned home from a surgical operation in a local sanitarium. Nine days afterward she developed fever. The physician said at the beginning that her health being already in a weakened condition, it would be very difficult for her to recover. The third or fourth day the physician said he thought it was typhoid, and asked for another physician to be called for consultation. The two agreed on the diagnosis of typhoid. The physician suggested an additional nurse and warned me that there was not one chance in a thousand for recovery.

I went to the Great Physician, and laid before Him the five children and His own cause, which I believed was at stake. It was my first all-night in prayer, I pleaded the Lord's promises. About daylight I received assurance of definite intervention, and a short while afterward I went into the sick room in confident hope and faith. The nurse met me with an astonished expression, and said that a most wonderful thing had happened,—"The fever is gone, and your wife is resting quietly for the first time." A slight temperature came that afternoon, but it did not shake our faith. There was no more temperature after that, however, and in three days she was sitting up, and she is still well and strong.

There is not the slightest shadow of a doubt as to Divine intervention in this case.

—M. E. D., in "I Cried, He Answered."

A Home Missionary Saved to Labor. A missionary in Kansas writes of his personal experience, to this effect. He had just begun to preach somewhat, as a young Christian, under the direction of his pastor, and in a fit of deep depression was returning from what he meant should be his last appointment, when he took a severe cold in a storm. In a few days he was so low, that the physician pronounced his case hopeless, and he put his affairs in order, arranged for his funeral, and calmly awaited his end. The pastor was away, at the first, but coming home, called and found him speechless, and received answers about his spiritual condition only by signs. He then called on two church members present to pray, and when they had finished, began himself. With the greatest simplicity he spoke of the Lord's goodness, and of the chastening which he had sent, and then turned to the world's need of laborers, and quoted Matt. 9:37, 38, from which two years before he had preached a powerful sermon, which had led several young men to devote themselves to the Gospel ministry. "And now," said he, "Lord, wilt Thou take them away again?" And he pleaded as did Jacob, when wrestling with the angel. Then he quoted the text in James 5:14, 15, as to the prayer of faith healing the sick, and cried out, "Lord, I do believe." At that moment the young man seemed to hear a voice saying, "You must preach the Gospel," and at once began to convalesce. For nearly forty years he has now been obeying that command, and receiving souls for his hire.

—*"Prayer and Its Remarkable Answers."*

"My Father's Child." One year at the Mildmay Conference Mr. Spurgeon made the following references to himself:—"After a period of continued pain, with little sleep, I sat up as best I could one morning in my bed in an agony of pain, and cried to the Lord for deliverance. I believed fully that He could deliver me there and then, and I pleaded my sonship and His Fatherhood. I went the length of pleading that He was my Father, and I said, 'If it were my child that suffered so, I would not let him suffer any longer if I could help him. Thou canst help, and by Thy Fatherly love I plead with Thee to give me rest.' I felt that I could add, 'Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' But I did the first thing first. I pleaded with my Father, and went first where Christ went first, saying, 'Father, if it be

possible let this cup pass from me.' I shall never forget my success in my appeal. In real earnest I believed God to be my Father, and threw myself upon Him, and within a few moments I dropped back upon the pillow, the pain subsided, and very soon I slept most peacefully."

SOULS SAVED; EPIDEMIC ENDED. (This incident exemplifies the power of united prayer, both for the salvation of men and for the healing of the body when the soul is right.) In response to a request from an invalid lady in Scotland, a missionary in India sent her the names of twelve stalwart non-caste Telugus, the two agreeing to pray for their salvation in accordance with the promise for united prayer (Matt. 18:19). These twelve men, long steeped in heathenism, soon bore evidence of the Spirit's convicting, converting power. They became transformed men, clean in life and constant in prayer. After a time they disappeared; but the missionary, going the following summer to the hill country for rest, found them there in the employ of a Scottish coffee planter to whom they had proved a double blessing.

A severe epidemic was sweeping the plantations of the district, carrying off many of the workers and causing operations to almost cease. One noon-day these twelve Telugus came to the planter's office, and said, "Mister, we want you to hold a prayer-meeting with us. We believe our God will stop this scourge, if we come to Him." He dismissed them, inviting them to return in ten minutes. Then ensued a terrific struggle within himself. Evidently these men thought him a Christian and he knew he was not. He thought of his parents' prayers, long unanswered. There an then he decided, opening his heart and life to the Saviour. Gladly he welcomed the Telugus upon their return, and a wonderful prayer-meeting followed in which all, including the planter and his operators, took part. That very day and hour the epidemic ceased. There were no more cases, either for the hospital or for the pyre.

III—In Adversity—Needing Financial Relief

RAILROAD FARE PROVIDED. I was invited to conduct a series of meetings. When the day for my departure arrived I found myself without enough money to pay the fare. Between my room and the station there were twenty men from whom I could, upon the merest suggestion, secure all

that I needed. But I was learning to trust God, and my prayer was that if He wanted me to go to D—— He would have the money for me at the station. With confidence I packed my bag, and walked to the train. Stepping up to the ticket office, I asked what the fare was to D——. "Two dollars," was the answer, and as the words were spoken, a man reached over my shoulder and laid two silver dollars down upon the counter in front of me.

—G. C. G., in "I Cried, He Answered."

SIX THOUSAND DOLLARS. During the World's Fair in Chicago Mr. Moody secured speakers from various parts of America and Europe. The expense incurred was very great. One noon, in the usual gathering of intimate advisers, Mr. Moody said, "I needed $7,000 for the work today. I have already received $1,000. I propose that before we eat we kneel down and ask God to send us the other $6,000." When we had all prayed, Mr. Moody closed, telling the Father in childlike simplicity of the need and asking that it be sent to him at once. Before they rose to leave a telegram was handed in, which read: "Your friends at Northfield at the close of the morning session had a feeling that you needed money for your work in Chicago. We have just taken up a collection. There are $6,000 in the baskets, and more to follow."

Later the sender of the message, learning of the prayer meeting, told how Dr. Gordon, while presiding over the Northfield gathering, was impressed with the feeling that Mr. Moody needed some money for his work in Chicago and proposed taking an offering. It resulted in $6,000 being placed in the baskets. As nearly as could be judged the prompting came into Dr. Gordon's heart at the very time the prayer was being offered in Chicago.

HALF-A-CROWN FOUND IN THE SAND. An evangelist tells that when he was a boy he often read the Bible to his aged great-grandmother. She was a godly woman, and taught him to love and trust the Lord. His parents were very poor, and one morning there was not anything for breakfast. His mother with a sad heart dressed the children, and sent them down to play by the seashore till help came. He watched the seabirds as they wheeled around him, and he remembered Christ's words, "Your Heavenly Father

feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" He thought if God provided for the birds He could as easily feed him. He knelt down and prayed that the Lord would send food. After wandering along the shore he began to build sand-houses with the other children. On lifting a handful of sand he saw something bright, and found it was half-a-crown. With great delight he hastened home with it to his mother, and soon they had a good breakfast.

—J. A., in "Our Faithful God."

"TAKE THIS AS FROM HIM." When in London I had only just enough money to take me back by rail to Glasgow. Wishing to have a few shillings in my pocket by which to obtain lodgings, I wanted to go by steamer, that being the cheaper way. Friends tried to dissuade me, not knowing my reason. The expenses were figured up, and I found I would save but 4s. 6d., and they urged it was not worth taking so long a journey for that sum. I had been asked to visit a young lady on that day, and was about to write a note to say that, leaving by steamer, I could not keep my engagement, when the thought came to me, Could I not give up that 4s. 6d. for the Lord's sake? Perhaps He had some service for me to do, or I might interest her in China, so I decided to go by the night train and to keep my engagement. We had a time of sweet fellowship together, and, when leaving, she pressed a small packet into my hand, saying, "Take this as from Him." When I opened it there was exactly 4s. 6d. inside. Oh, how strengthened and helped I was by that simple act! It seemed as if God had said, "Do not doubt; I will care for you."

—Mrs. Stott, in "Our Faithful God."

IV—In Peril—Needing Protection

SAVED FROM THE FLAMES. A remarkable instance occurred at Saiong, China, of the way God honors faith. There was a terrible fire in the town, and a large number of houses were burned to the ground, leaving the poor families homeless. The people were greatly terrified, seeing the flames advancing and no means apparently of arresting their progress. In one house, right in their path, was an old Christian woman. She climbed on the roof, and, stretching her arm out to the sky, she cried aloud to Jesus to save her.

Next day it was discovered that, though the houses all around were burned, hers was untouched. This event has much impressed even the heathen, and has led the Christians to have more simple faith in God.

—From the Life of Robert and Louisa Stewart.

BURDENED TO PRAY. A young man left a New England city to go as a missionary. Time passed. One night his pastor in the homeland was awakened in the dead of night, beset with the fear that his young parishioner was in peril. A great burden of prayer was rolled upon him. He arose and gave himself for hours to earnest intercession for the safety of his friend. At that very time this was happening in the heart of Africa: The missionary, accompanied by a native, had started out to hunt. As they journeyed they ran upon two lions and a lioness. The missionary fired, killing one of the lions, and wounding the other. The lioness seemingly fled. In fact she had only hidden in the jungle. The missionary now advanced and fired again upon the wounded lion. The rifle had scarcely cracked when the great brute lioness leaped upon him from her ambush. With one blow she struck him to the ground. In an instant her teeth were sunk in his arm and her claws tearing fiercely at his shoulder. He cried out to the native to shoot, but the latter could not, as the missionary was between him and the lioness. In his panic however, the native fired his rifle in the air. At once the lioness looked up. She dropped the missionary from her jaws. He rolled over into the bottom of a shallow ditch. And then instead of leaping upon him and finishing her work, the lioness turned and trotted into the jungle. The bleeding missionary was helped into camp. There, after six weeks, he recovered completely from an experience which it is given to but few men to pass through. God had indeed "stopped the mouths of lions" for him. The tidings of his wonderful escape went back home to his faithful pastor. And he who had prayed now saw. *—J. H. McConkey.*

"COVER MY DEFENSELESS HEAD." Charles Wesley's famous hymn, "Jesus, Lover of My Soul, let me to Thy bosom fly," has brought blessing and comfort to untold thousands. Many years ago a soldier in the Confederate army in the Civil War spoke in public of the help this hymn was to him. He said, "I was a mere boy and had just been

drafted to service. One night I was put on outpost duty in an advanced and lonely place. I was informed that the enemy was close by. I knew that my life was in danger; the bright moonlight made me plainly visible. To keep up my spirits and quiet my nerves I began to sing the hymn, 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul,' and by the time I came to the words, 'Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of Thy wing,' I had recovered myself. It seemed as if all my fears had vanished, and I paced my beat the rest of the time, until relieved, as fearless as if it were daytime. I felt that my prayer was answered."

This was spoken in public before a number of people who had gathered. While he was speaking, a man sitting near him gazed at him with evident and increasing astonishment. When he finished his story, this second man exclaimed: "This is most extraordinary. That very night I was in that very wood on scout duty with a detachment of Federal troops. We knew that we were close to the Confederate lines. As we approached the edge of the woods we heard a clear voice begin to sing 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul.' We crept softly forward, not knowing what was there. Presently we saw plainly in the moonlight the solitary figure of a Confederate sentry, pacing his beat, and it was he who was singing. Instantly a dozen muskets covered him, waiting for my order to fire. Just then he sang with a feeling of trust and pathos, 'Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of Thy wing.' I ordered the guns lowered and said to my men, 'Don't touch that boy! We will go back to camp.'" Then taking the ex-Confederate by the hand, he said, "That hymn saved your life that night. And your trust in God, your invisible protector, reached my soul and saved me."

V—In Doubt—Needing Guidance

God Hears Prayer of Boy. My first recollection of God hearing my prayer goes back to the time when as a barefooted lad I lived with my parents on a farm. A few days before I had been presented with my first jack-knife, in those times quite an event in a boy's life. That morning while playing in the pasture, I had lost the precious knife and had spent over two hours in a fruitless search for the same. When my mother called me in to dinner my

heart was too full of sorrow over my loss to care for any. It flashed into my mind that the Lord knew where that knife was, then why not ask Him to show me where it was? The only prayer that I knew up to that time was my evening prayer that I always repeated on my knees at my bed before retiring. That was the only place for prayer that I knew, so while the family were at dinner I slipped into my bedroom and kneeling by my bed I poured out to the Lord my trouble and asked Him to lead me to where the lost knife lay. I got up from my knees, dried my tears, and with full confidence that I would find that knife, ran out again into the pasture, and walked straight to where I picked up the knife, about twenty-five yards into the field.

I was too young to understand the theology of prayer, but I well remember that that day I had an overwhelming sense of the fact that God was interested in a boy's troubles, and my heart was filled with gladness.

—R. L. E., in "I Cried, He Answered."

A Position Secured. While pastor in Seattle I set out one day to locate a job for one of our University students who had tried and failed. Jobs in his line were scarce. I went to the lower end of the city to see a man. He was out to lunch. As I paced up and down while waiting I thought of my prayer-life. This was an opportunity to test it. I would lay down my Gideon's fleece and ask God to give evidence that He had sent me. Scarcely had I begun upon this communion than my eye was attracted by a man leaving an adjoining place of business to take his auto. A voice said, "Approach him." I reflected that he was probably a customer. But I yielded to the leading, caught him in the act of starting, discovered him to be the president of the concern, and to my statement and inquiry, he replied, "Yes, I am looking for just such a man." He invited me to ride to the city with him. At first I declined, saying I wanted to see Mr. —— but upon reflection I said, "This is the answer to my prayer, my quest ends here." Entering the building I found rows of such machines as my student desired experience with. I walked away with a happy heart, assured that God knew how to secure positions. Next morning my man claimed it and continued happy in it for many years. *—N. B. H.*

At Break of Day. A working man was for a considerable time out of employment. He sought work in many directions, but always failed to get it. His faith was sorely tried, but he continued to wait on the Lord, pleading that He would open a place for him. One morning he awoke early, and became deeply impressed by the thought that he should apply at a certain large works. He told his wife, but she tried to dissuade him from going out so early. He was lying down again, but the impression returned that he must go to the place at once. He rose and left the house. He went direct towards the works, and on the way met the manager, who engaged him on the spot. He still cherishes feelings of thankfulness for this answer to his prayers in a time of trouble. *—W. F., in "Our Faithful God."*

VI—In Sin—Needing Salvation

Converted in a Box Car. In a night of prayer at De Leon, Texas, Mr. W. asked if we could join him in Matthew 18:19 to pray that his son, who had been away from home for three years, and from whom he had not heard, might be saved that very hour. Sixteen of us agreed. Five days later he read a letter to 800 people, in which the son told him he was a railway brakeman in Oklahoma, and that, while sitting in a box car at the very hour we prayed, he got to thinking about the possibility of being killed in a wreck. Eternity stared him in the face, and there and then he gave his heart to God. *—L. E. F., in "I Cried, He Answered."*

J. Hudson Taylor, when a lad of fifteen, one day took from his father's library a pamphlet, thinking to find some interesting incident to occupy his mind. Anything pertaining to salvation, he purposed to avoid; it did not interest him. However, as he explains, "Little did I know what was going on in the heart of my dear mother, seventy or eighty miles away. She rose from the dinner table that afternoon with an intense yearning for the conversion of her boy, and feeling that—absent from home, and having more leisure than she could otherwise secure—a special opportunity was afforded her of pleading with God on my behalf. She went to her room and turned the key in the door, resolved not to leave that spot until her prayers were answered. Hour after hour did that dear mother plead for me, until at length she could pray no longer, but was constrained to

praise God for that which His Spirit taught her had already been accomplished—the conversion of her only son."

Meantime, as he read, young Taylor was struck with the phrase, "The finished work of Christ." His mind was wondrously illuminated by the Spirit as to its meaning for him. He saw there was nothing for him to do but to fall on his knees, accept it, and praise Him for evermore. This he did. Thus while the mother was praising God on her knees in her chamber, her young son became similarly engaged in the old warehouse to which he had gone to read. His sister's diary showed that, exactly one month before, she had given herself to definite daily prayer for his conversion.

Two Sons Saved. In the South a woman arose before a prayer-meeting of about one hundred and fifty women and said, "Ladies, I do not believe that God hears and answers prayer, but I do wish to believe in it. Please pray just now that I may be given this faith." They all knelt in prayer. In a few minutes the lady arose, and said, "How it was done I do not know; but I do believe in it now. Please pray just now that God will save my two wicked sons. They are away from home. I do not know where they are, but God does. Please pray that God will save them just now, this very day, wherever they are." Again the women knelt in prayer. At the prayer-meeting the next morning this lady ran into the church, the tears streaming down her cheeks, waving a telegram in each hand, and exclaimed: "Ladies, here they are, a telegram from each of my boys, and they both say they accepted the Saviour yesterday morning!"

—T. T. M., in "I Cried, He Answered."

A Great Sinner Converted. During this year I was informed about the conversion of one of the very greatest sinners that I ever heard of in all my service for the Lord. Repeatedly I fell on my knees with his wife, and asked the Lord for his conversion, when she came to me in the deepest distress of soul, on account of the most barbarous and cruel treatment she received from him, in his bitter enmity against her for the Lord's sake, and because he could not provoke her to be in a passion, and *she would not* strike him again, and the like. At the time when it was at its worst I pleaded especially on his behalf the promise of Matthew 18:19:

"Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." And now this awful persecutor is converted.

—George Mueller's Narratives.

VII—In Spiritual Dearth—Needing Revival

Dr. Lyman Beecher, father of Henry Ward Beecher, was once called to a Connecticut town to conduct special meetings. As they proceeded the response so far exceeded expectation as to cause him to wonder. One day he was asked to call upon a man who was a shut-in. The man evinced such interest in the meetings and the conversions as to cause Dr. Beecher to inquire more particularly. He discovered this man's prayers to be the key to the revival. It seems that the man, realizing his inability to serve otherwise, had begun to pray for his town. He asked God for the conversion of his fellow-townsmen. In his praying he passed up one street and down the next. Then, taking a street, he turned into a house and prayed for its occupants. And so he went from house to house, over the entire town. To answer his prayers God had sent His messenger and, with him, a mighty spiritual movement.

Rev. John Livingston's Famous Sermon. This saintly man says—"In the parish of Shotts I used to find more liberty in preaching than elsewhere. Yea, the one day in all my life wherein I got most the presence of God in public was on a Monday, after communion preaching, in the churchyard of Shotts, the 21st of June, 1630. The night before I had been with some Christians, who spent the night in conference and prayer. When I was alone in the fields about eight or nine in the morning, before we were to go to sermon, there came such a misgiving of spirit upon me, considering my unworthiness and weakness, and the multitude and expectation of the people, that I was consulting with myself to have stolen away somewhere, and declined that day's preaching, but that I durst not so far distrust God, and so went to sermon and got good assistance. I had about one hour and a half upon the points I had meditated, on Ezek. 37:25-26; and, in end, offering to close with some words of exhortation, I was led on about an hour's time in a strain of exhortation and warning, with such liberty and melting

of heart as I never had the like in public all my life." Other ministers were there, and as a result of this day's work, specially John Livingston's preaching, 500 were converted.

—*"Our Faithful God."*

Mr. Moody's Going to London. In 1871 D. L. Moody went to London, seeking rest and spiritual refreshment. One day, after he had given a brief word of testimony, a Congregational minister asked him to preach for him. This he consented to do. His initial message was met with cold unresponsiveness. But at the evening service, when the invitation was given, hundreds responded. He invited those who wished to become Christians into the adjoining room. More came than could be seated. He could not understand it, so he requested those who were in earnest to meet the pastor there on Monday night. Mr. Moody left next day for Dublin, but on Tuesday he received a wire, stating that more had come on Monday than on Sunday, and urging him to return as they had a revival on their hands. In ten days of subsequent ministry hundreds united with the Church.

The secret of all this was the fact that one invalid woman of the congregation, unable to labor for her Lord, had taken upon herself to pray. A copy of an American paper, used as wrapping if we recall correctly, had casually come into her hand. It contained some reference to Mr. Moody. She was led to pray, definitely, that the Lord would send him to London, that He would send him to her Church, so cold and formal, and that He would bring to pass a revival. She had prayed thus for five years when her niece came home from service and reported that Mr. Moody had preached. That afternoon, refusing food, she gave herself to fasting and prayer. She was praying while Mr. Moody preached that night, and the amazing results followed. Thus God was enabled to bring about the great revivals of Moody and Sankey in the British Isles through one woman, an invalid, who prayed.

To the above are added two incidents designed to stimulate prayer for laborers, so greatly needed at home and abroad.

Pastorless Churches. Some years ago in Iowa there were scores of Baptist churches which were pastorless. The

leaders of the denomination had diligently sought for a supply sufficient to occupy these vacant places, but without success. In a convention at Webster City this critical condition was brought before the annual assembly of the denomination and considerable discussion was engaged in. Finally some one arose and suggested that all business be put aside and that the convention betake itself to prayer, asking the Lord of the harvest for the needed laborers. This was done, and not long afterward in the denominational college at Des Moines, where hitherto not one candidate for the ministry was studying, forty-one men were enrolled who definitely had the ministry at home or mission service abroad in view. Three came forth from one church in the space of a single year, and twenty of the forty-one have contributed up to the present day an aggregate of 378 years in active service! It counts to pray.—*Dr. W. L. Ferguson of India.*

JACOB CHAMBERLAIN'S MOTHER is an inspiring example of what one person can do to enlist workers by prayer and personal effort. Four out of five of her own children were led into the missionary purpose by her prayers. On the day her famous son Jacob was to sail for India she sought an interview with him and told him what she had never told him before, that her first act on rising from her bed after his birth was to carry him to her secret place of prayer and lay him on God's altar and consecrate him to God as a foreign missionary. All through his college, seminary, and medical course she had prayed. Each year she had renewed the gift as he grew, but had never told him, because she felt that God alone must make his call clear. At her funeral the president of Oberlin College said she had led to Christ and put into the ministry forty young men, most of whom became home or foreign missionaries.—*W. E. Doughty, "The Life of Prayer."*

THE APPEAL

THE CALL TO A LIFE OF PRAYER

Our God "worketh for him that waiteth for Him"—
Isa. 46:4, R.V.

Nothing is so greatly needed today as a new demonstration of the power of God in human affairs. Men doubt His love, His power, His purposes of grace in Christ Jesus, yea, His very existence. In this state of doubt they flout, not alone the Gospel invitation, but the moral law itself. In consequence, evil springs up, unrebuked, on all sides.

While men are busy removing the note of authority from the Christian faith, reducing God's Word to the level of literature, sacred and valuable but a mere record of human experience, the masses wander in the broad fields of indifference or wallow in the deep slough of spiritual despair. "If the foundations be removed, what can the righteous do?" They can make their appeal to One "whose arm is not shortened that it cannot save."

The situation is such as to drive the devoted servant of the Lord to his knees, conscious of utter impotence, zealous for His honor, pleading as did the Psalmist of old:

> "It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law" (Ps. 119:126).

Such a plea inevitably turns back upon the pleader as a call to consistent, persistent prayer. Do we really long to see God work? Very well; He meets us with the reminder that He "worketh for him that waiteth for Him."

Christians are perplexed, burdened, distressed, divided. We dare not drift with the current. We must know His mind. We must be led of His Spirit. We must let Him guide us into His paths of peace. Moreover, this personal touch of our Father's hand in our affairs is just the revivifying of faith that we need. Nothing will so restore the experience of First Century power in Twentieth Century living. All our perplexities must be a call to prayer, that He may work.

Prayer as a Life-Calling

Men give themselves to business, to various professions, preaching, teaching, whatever it may be, in the more or less

serious and settled conviction that they are engaged in that to which the Lord has appointed them in life. But in all these centuries how many have looked upon prayer as their calling, their chief occupation, their business through which they might enter into partnership with Christ to get things done?

Francis of Assisi in Italy; Martin Luther in Germany; John Knox in Scotland; George Mueller in England; David Brainerd in America—these undoubtedly did so. J. Hudson Taylor and D. E. Hoste of China, have made prayer their serious business for the accomplishing of the Lord's service. "Praying (John) Hyde" of India exercised himself in prayer as *the* business of his life.

Doubtless many more should be mentioned, and many others there are whose exploits through prayer will be known only in the glory. Yet, why, we are constrained to ask in view of the facts of Christian faith and life—why should not every follower of Christ be outstandingly characterized by the designation: "Behold, he prayeth"?

If we are "filled with the Spirit," will He not be in us the Spirit of Prayer? Will He not inevitably prompt us to a Life of Prayer?

Who of our own day and generation will hear the Master saying to them, very personally, " 'I have chosen you, and ordained you' to join Me in the work of prayer"?

MY PRAYER-COVENANT

"In response to the call of God, for the manifesting of His glory and the meeting of my fellowman's need, I here and now dedicate myself to a Life of Prayer. This I do, trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for the supply of faith, guidance, and grace to persevere."

Signed.....

Date.....

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